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Poll.

HAY FEVER

H A Y F E V E R

BY

WALTER HERRIES POLLOCK

AND

GUY C. POLLOCK

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

NEW YORK AND BOMBAY

1905

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CHAPTER I.

"WELL! what is it now?" cried, rather crossly, Mr. Henry Tempest, stockbroker, as the door of his inner office in the City of London opened to admit his confidential clerk. Now, crossness was far from usual with Mr. Tempest, and he himself felt it to be so incongruous that he added, as apologetically as was consistent with dignity: "I really don't know how many times I've tried to get ahead with this letter to Whistler & Co.—a letter that, as you will know, Pettigood, if you remember, I absolutely must answer with my own hand. One thing after another has interrupted my writing, and now it has——" Here Mr. Tempest was interrupted in his speaking by a violent sneeze, which was rapidly followed by another and yet another.

"Dear me, sir," exclaimed Pettigood, who, as it so happened, had not that morning—it was

a beautiful morning in July—as yet seen his principal to speak to, “you have got a bad cold!”

“You think so, Pettigood?” said Mr. Tempest, with mildly ironical inquiry.

“How can I think otherwise, sir?” asked Pettigood, with sympathetic gravity.

“Well,” resumed the principal, with what was meant to be a freezing but unluckily became a sneezing expression, “in so thinking you are mistaken.”

“Do you mean, sir,” said Pettigood, astonished, “that you have *not* got a cold?”

“I have *not* got a cold,” answered Mr. Tempest; “and, odd as it may seem, I wish I had, for then I might know or learn how to set about curing it, while with this confounded——” Here he was interrupted by another violent fit of sneezing.

When silence was restored, “Ah!” said Pettigood, with commiseration and with dawning intelligence, “then it must be an attack of hay fever.”

“The very words,” replied the stockbroker, “that my housekeeper used this morning when I told her that I’d waked up in the small hours

feeling as if there were fireworks going off in my head, my eyes running like millstreams, and with such fits of sneezing as I'd never heard or heard *of*; and as such authorities as you and she are agreed, of course there can be no doubt about it."

"I fear that it might be so, sir," answered Pettigood. "I remember that my grandmother, who had much herbal knowledge——"

"She said," cut in Mr. Tempest so swiftly that one might conclude he had heard of Pettigood's grandmother and her lore in "simples" before, "she said, in her melancholy twang (I don't mean your grandmother, but my house-keeper) that"—here he gave a dolorous attempt at mimicry—"she'd never heard of anything in the way of a cure, leastways to do any lasting good, except patience. What do you think of that for a remedy, Pettigood?"

"Well, sir, my grand——"

Again Mr. Tempest cut swiftly in with:—

"In my ignorance I thought that as it seemed like a cold I might walk it, or at least some of it, off. So I walked across the parks; and"—the interruption came as before—"as you see, the experiment was a failure."

"Germs, sir," said Pettigood, "and vegetation do seem to be allied."

"They do, indeed," rejoined the stockbroker bitterly. "But let us try to make the best of it." And then Mr. Tempest assumed his stiffest business air—an air which only his intimates, those who had known him in his gay youth, were aware had been carefully and painfully acquired. Chief among these intimates were Sir George Paston, Bart., of "Sanssouci House" (so called by a forebear who admired Frederick the Great), Southshire, and his one fair daughter, Cicely; also Mr. Tempest's favourite nephew, Archibald, lieutenant in the Loamshire Regiment, now just back from a "little war"; also, at a decent interval, Edward Pettigood, the confidential clerk whom we have already seen, and to whom Mr. Tempest now continued briskly:—

"Come—to work! At what time did you say that tiresome woman—ahem!—that indefatigable client of mine, Mrs. Sapley, said she would be here to-day? She called yesterday, didn't she, while I was out, and left a message?"

"Yes, sir," Pettigood replied, with grave

melancholy, "she did ; but she did not mention any time."

"How like a woman!" said Mr. Tempest ; "and how particularly like that particular woman! I am expecting Sir George Paston and his daughter to come here with my nephew. They are to meet at the Guildhall picture show and come on to see me. If Mrs. Sapley calls while they are here, she must wait."

"Very well, sir," said Pettigood, disappearing, only to reappear a moment later with something like a cheerful smile, and with the words : "Mr. Archibald to see you, sir".

"Show him in," said Mr. Tempest, also smiling as well as he could through a paroxysm of sneezing, which again seized him ; and there entered, cutting short the formal invitation of the still smiling Pettigood, a young man, well set up, well groomed, well looking, who clapped the outgoing Pettigood amicably on the shoulder as he passed, and advanced with outstretched hand to Mr. Tempest.

The stockbroker's hand came forward to meet the proffered grasp as Mr. Tempest greeted his nephew with a cheerful, one might say juvenile, air.

"Well, Archie," he cried, in a jubilant tone, "it's good to see you! Ah! Would one could see you oftener here!"

"Every day, for instance," replied the young man, laughing lightly.

"To be sure," replied Mr. Tempest, with grave geniality, "every day! Now, if only——"

"If only," broke in the other, still laughing, "if only this tottering veteran had preferred the Stock Exchange to the bugle call, and pen and ink and the office desk to a musket, fife and drum—why, then, things would have turned out quite differently, wouldn't they, nunky?"

In this irreverent fashion did his nephew address Mr. Tempest.

"Ah, well," replied the stockbroker, with a head-shake, "I certainly had wished that you should follow in my footsteps; but it was not to be, and——"

"And," again interrupted the other, "if it had been, you wouldn't now be celebrating 'the soldier's return'. Think of that, and be consoled. Why, if only you have decent luck, you'll be uncle to a field-marshal some day!"

It may be here noted that during the conversation just recorded Mr. Tempest had not

once sneezed. It may be that the excitement of seeing his favourite nephew had for a time overcome his physical ailment, as with an actor who forgets his personal suffering in the stress and storm of his part. That is a question for a psycho-physiologist. Or it may be that the affliction came in ebbs and flows, and this was one of the ebbs. That is a question for a specialist in nerves ("a nervous specialist," though vilely used in the same sense, suggests a suffering monster let loose to cause greater suffering to humanity). Or, again, it may be that the imp of hay fever had for a moment given his whole attention to starting or exacerbating some other interesting case. That is a question for a speculator in realms other than those of the Stock Exchange. The plain duty of historians is to record the fact that since Archie's entrance Mr. Tempest had not as yet sneezed. Now, however, in reply to his nephew's last-mentioned observations, the uncle, fully intending to begin with the words "My dear boy," lifted up his voice instead, and unwillingly, to cry aloud:—

"My atchew! atchew! atchew!" (*bis* and *ter*, and then *da capo*, and so into a *moto perpetuo*).

"Hallo, nunky!" exclaimed Archie, somewhat fatuously, "why, you've got a cold!"

"Got—a—what?" answered the uncle, with a vain hankering for sarcasm between the violent sneezes; and here, by another caprice of the malady, Mr. Tempest got breathing-time to explain to Archie without interruption the nature of the trouble which had overtaken him, ending up with a melancholy emphasis on the words: "And for want of a worse name they call it hay fever". No sooner were these words uttered than, as if they had offended the imp, Mr. Tempest burst into a very tornado of sneezing, during which Archie regarded him with commiseration and with a whistling expression of mouth. When the storm had died down, he said, very sagely: "By George! nunky, you *have* got it bad, and no mistake; and I was just going to ask you about coming down to Sanssouci to-night."

"Sanssouci? George Paston's?" replied the uncle. "I've heard nothing about it. Besides, my dear boy, how can I possibly go anywhere when I'm like this?" These words were spoken without sneezing, but, and no wonder, wearily. And to save readers some weariness we will

now beg them of their courtesy to "take it as sneezed" till further notice in every third or fourth speech uttered by Mr. Tempest.

"As for knowing nothing about it," continued Mr. Archibald Tempest, "Sir George Paston is now on his way, and I know he is going to ask you. I hope he won't mind my having taken the words out of his mouth."

"Ha!" said his uncle, "to be sure, it has quite escaped me, what with one thing and another, to ask why you didn't all three come together, as his note led me to expect you and him and Cicely—or should I say Cicely and you and him?" The last words were accented with intention.

"Ha—h'm—well," replied Archie, seeming to catch for the moment something of his uncle's occasional hesitancy of manner, and then picking himself up with "Yes; joy of seeing me, and undivided attention to sneezing. Quite enough to put it out of your head. Yes; he had to call at some assurance office, I think it was, so Cicely stayed with him, and I came on as a sort of advanced guard. They can't be far behind me, I think."

"And hope," interposed the stockbroker roguishly.

"And hope," repeated the subaltern, with preternatural gravity. "But look here, there's one point as to Sanssouci disposed of—I mean, your not having heard anything about it, and that. By-the-by, I had better tell you at once that if you do come you'll have to dine *tête-à-tête* with Sir George to-night. Cicely and I are requisitioned to the Grange—old Sapley's place."

"The Professor?" queried Mr. Tempest, with some interest.

"Yes, the Professor. Egypt, alligators, mummies—all that kind of thing. Got a wife as queer and odd as any of his mummies, and he's as jealous of her as—as anything," said Archie, after vain search for a simile.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Tempest aloud, adding *in petto*, "I wonder if the Professor knows of Mrs. Sapley's ventures on the Stock Exchange. If not, it might be awkward."

Then he resumed to his nephew: "Very interesting, Archie, but you know it's not of the slightest use telling me all this, because, as I said before, how can I possibly go anywhere? How can I possibly inflict my presence as a guest upon a fellow-man when I'm"—here he

was interrupted—"when I'm, as you hear for yourself, like this?"

"Steady on," replied the youthful warrior, "I was just coming to that. I believe I see a pretty good chance of your becoming—well, *not* like this."

"You do!" cried his uncle delightedly. "Bless you, my boy, bless you!"

"According to Cocker and superstition," rejoined the other, "it's I who ought to be saying *bless you*. But look you here! Have you forgotten that Sir George is not only a great traveller but also a great dabbler in medicine?"

"Eh?" said the stockbroker, with lively excitement.

"And," pursued Archie, "that in his travels he has picked up all kinds of remedies that he's fond of gas—I mean talking about? Put this and that together, and see what Stock Exchange arithmetic makes of it."

"Why," exclaimed Mr. Tempest, "of course he might know of the very thing to stop this confounded nuisance; and I used to laugh at his quackeries, as I called them."

"Well," replied the other, "you take the tip from me. Tell him your case—not that it'll

want much telling in words—ask his advice, and see what comes of it.”

“I will—I will!” exclaimed Mr. Tempest. “It’s a most happy inspiration. Bless you, my boy! I repeat the blessing. George Paston may know of the very thing to put a stop to this accursed worry. I hope he may—I devoutly wish he may.”

Thus, with much enthusiasm, spoke Henry Tempest; and seldom, perhaps never, save and except always the famous case of Mr. Bultitude, recorded by the admirable Mr. Anstey, has a hasty wish been answered more fully and with more unforeseen results.

CHAPTER II.

SCARCELY had Mr. Tempest uttered his seemingly ordinary desire to find by his friend's aid a cure for his malady than Pettigood again appeared at the door and held it open to admit Sir George Paston and his daughter Cicely. Sir George had a trim figure and an alert carriage, silver-grey hair and upturned moustache, and a bright, pleasant twinkle in his eye which seemed to say that, if not a wit himself, he must certainly be an amateur both of wit and of humour. As for his companion, let each readily call to mind the graces which he most affects in a young girl of eighteen or so, and imagine Cicely endowed with them. We can scarcely say fairer than that.

As Pettigood, still seasoning his official demureness with a discreet air of welcome, retired, greetings were interchanged among the four remaining personages; and from Archie's

warmth of manner one would scarce have thought that he had parted from Cicely only some half or three-quarters of an hour ago. The ceremonies of meeting over,

"Henry," said Sir George, "I want a few words with you on business. What would you advise about——" Here his voice dropped, so that he was heard only by the stockbroker, who listened attentively, and was evidently about to reply when a fit of sneezing deprived him of speech. "Why," cried Paston, "you've got a——"

"Yes, I have," said Mr. Tempest quite snappishly, adding, however: "Forgive me, this is bad for the temper. I was going to ask your advice about it; but let us take your business first. Come over here into the window. We'll leave the young people to entertain each other."

Thus was a field left clear to Archie Tempest and Cicely Paston, who, *more amantium*, looked at each other, and then away from each other, and then wondered mutely which would speak first.

The young man, as was fitting, took his courage in both hands and opened conversation with:—

"Cicely, I—I beg your pardon, you were going to speak?"

"No," said Cicely; "pray go on."

"Well, then," answered Archie, "look here, I'm looking forward tremendously to to-night."

"Ah!" rejoined Cicely demurely, "I believe Mrs. Sapley is very clever and attractive."

"Mrs. Sapley!" cried the other, with a fine scorn; "you know well enough that what I'm looking forward to is seeing you!"

"Why," came the answer, "you have seen me this morning."

"This morning, yes. After months of absence—and in a picture-gallery, and with your father." Then, as she raised her eyebrows, he turned very red, and caught himself up hurriedly with: "Not but what I'm devoted to your father, and that, but you know it's not the same thing."

"No," Mr. Tempest was heard to say to Sir George in the window; "circumstances alter cases. I think there's a chance now."

Archie, quick to catch up the coincidence, went on: "You hear what my uncle says? It fits in exactly, and I hope to-night there will be a chance of really seeing you."

"At a dinner-party?" asked Cicely.

"To be sure there's safety in numbers," chimed in Sir George unconsciously.

"To be sure," echoed Archie to Cicely; "and to say nothing of dinner, there'll be a chance afterwards for a quiet corner—the billiard-room, the conservatory, all manner of games."

(Had Archie known precisely what manner of games he was to take part in that night, he might have looked forward to it with tempered joy; but this remark is perhaps a little previous.)

"You are taking it for granted," said Cicely, looking at him with a smile hovering about her mouth, "that I regard a quiet corner as a desirable haven."

"Well, but don't you, Cicely, don't you? You know I've thought such a lot of you all this time."

"And I of—of all of you who were out there with all the weary waiting and anxiety."

"Ah, yes; but not of one particular person more than another?" asked Archie insistently.

Cicely looked down and then looked up, and might have given a not discouraging answer, but at that moment Sir George and Mr. Tempest

emerged from the window recess and interrupted the colloquy. They had finished their business talk, and had got on to the subject of Mr. Tempest's affliction.

"I don't say, my dear Henry," Sir George was observing, "that it's an absolute specific; I don't believe there's any such thing for hay fever; but I do say that it's worth trying. It certainly cut short the only bad attack I ever had."

"Be very careful," said Cicely laughing, but maybe a little out of humour at the interruption, "how you meddle with any of papa's celebrated remedies that he's picked up in all kinds of outlandish places."

"Nonsense, girl," said Sir George, "no one need sneer at this remedy. It's true I heard of it first when I was travelling, but when I got a touch of that wretched hay fever I went to no less a person than Sir Robert Sawyer, happened to mention this stuff, and he knew all about it. Said just what I've said to you, Tempest, in the very same words—that it's well worth trying. Now, stop a bit——" Here he pulled out a thin pocket-book and began to look through its contents, while Cicely interrupted:—

"I knew what was coming."

Her father waved the interruption aside and continued :—

"Yes, here, by good luck, it is! Sir Robert's own prescription. You take it, Tempest—I've got a copy—and have it made up at once. Send your confidential clerk with it to the best chemist within reach." Mr. Tempest obediently rang for Pettigood. "And mind you pay attention to the directions. Four drops, you see, to begin with, rising by degrees to twenty: and then if it hasn't taken the sneezing out of you, you'd better give it up. You see what it is—well, in plain English it's neither more nor less than the stuff they make hasheesh of, and I'm sure to tell you that is quite enough. There, give it to Mr. Pettigood," the admirable clerk had just entered, "and let's hope it will do you good."

"Fortified with this, sir," said Archie, addressing his uncle with a proper respect before company, "I do hope you'll come down to Sans-souci for dinner to-night."

"Yes, do come, Mr. Tempest, do!" added Cicely entreatingly.

"Who," replied Mr. Tempest gallantly, "of

mortal mould could resist so fair an invitation? Yes, I will come."

"Then that's all right," said Sir George. "Come along, children. We must catch the earlier train. Now mind, my dear Henry, be very careful about that hasheesh stuff." And with this last warning he and the young people took their departure.

The stockbroker, left alone, sent for a clerk, whom he instructed to telephone through to his man to pack his bag and take it to Waterloo, smiled, sneezed, and sat down to make one more attempt at finishing his interrupted letter. Hardly, however, had he written two words when a sound of voices in the outer office was followed by the entrance of a clerk bearing a visiting card, which he presented with the words: "Gentleman said he wished to see you immediately on a matter of importance, sir, and wouldn't keep you a minute."

"That means," said Mr. Tempest, "that he will keep me half an hour if I let him." Then, surveying the card through his gold-rimmed eye-glasses (which he had assumed the moment he had become a member of the Stock Exchange), he read out: "*Sir Harcourt Courtly.*"

The name seems somehow familiar to me, and yet I can't precisely remember—well, show the gentleman in, and let us hope for the best."

The clerk disappeared, and then reappeared to show in a personage who seemed to be a middle-aged man about town, and whose face and figure in no way helped the stockbroker to identify him.

"Ha, Tempest! How do?" said the visitor airily, almost too airily; and then, as the door closed behind the retreating clerk, suddenly changed his whole manner to say: "Beg pardon, sir, I'm Hawley."

Mr. Tempest stared.

"Mark Hawley," added the other, with a kind of patronising encouragement.

Mr. Tempest stared more.

"Mark Hawley, the detective," said the other, as if capping a climax.

"Oh! Ah! Yes!" answered Mr. Tempest, with an awakening air, "to be sure—Mr. Hawley from New Scotland Yard. About that unfortunate business at my house, no doubt."

"Yes, sir," replied Hawley; "the opossum spoons that were—hem!—missing."

"The," cried Mr. Tempest, amazedly, "the—oh, yes ; the Apostle spoons."

"Right, sir," rejoined Hawley, not moving a muscle, "the Apostle spoons. Well, sir, it was—but I beg pardon, sir, for presenting myself as an alias and addressing myself to you so familiarly."

"The name puzzled me for a moment, and the disguise is certainly most effective," said Mr. Tempest, adding to himself: "And why the dooce he put it on to call here I can't imagine."

"Yes, sir, it's the clothes that does it. Sir Alfred—that's the chief, sir—he always says to us p'leece: 'Don't you go fiddling and faddling about any false moustaches and that'. And—*exceptis excipientis*, if I may use such an expression—and we don't. No ; you take it from me, sir, it's the clothes that does it."

"Ha! Most interesting. And have you any information for me?"

Mark Hawley straightened himself up and began: "Acting on information received——" But the stockbroker interrupted with:—

"The phrase seems familiar. I know you

will forgive me, but I have a good deal of business on hand, so if you could tell me at once I should be grateful."

"Well, sir," replied the detective, with a resigned air, "not to make a mystery of it, it was the cook."

"Oh, dear me!" said Mr. Tempest; "what a pity!"

"Yes, sir; I've heard many kind-hearted gentlemen say that, specially of cooks. Now, you can take it from me, sir, that——"

At this moment there was a knock at the door, and in response to Mr. Tempest's "Come in!" Pettigood entered, bringing with him a chemist's bottle, resembling a pocket-flask in flatness and capacity, and saying:—

"As you were in a hurry, sir, I did not wait while they copied the prescription. It will be sent in the course of the day."

Hawley, on seeing him, assumed a lounging attitude, and said:—

"I assure you, my dear Tempest, Lady Courtly perfectly agrees with you." Then, when Pettigood vanished, he added, in his own manner: "You'll excuse me, sir, but we p'leece like to keep up the deception."

"So I see," said Mr. Tempest, drily. "Then you are sure it was the cook?"

"You may take it from me," said Hawley, "that I'm as sure as assurance can be; but"—as Mr. Tempest fidgeted a little—"I won't detain you now, sir. I shall bring or send you a fuller report to-night at your residence. You will be so good, sir, as not to know the bearer." Then there was a brief and friendly argument, in which the stockbroker won, as to whether a "small recognition of his great services" could with propriety be accepted or not, and then Hawley opened the door into the outer office, saying loudly as he did so:—

"Well, so long, Tempest!" and then he disappeared.

Left alone, the stockbroker said to himself: "What an ass he is! What an ass he is!" After that he looked curiously at the bottle which Pettigood had brought, and after that he rang for Pettigood.

CHAPTER III.

PETTIGOOD entered, and for his part regarded the bottle with a look of a different kind. Hope, indeed, there was in it, but it was very far subservient to a darkling suspicion. He was in truth considering whether he should again urge upon his master that atavian remedy which at least could do no harm, whereas who knew what mischief might not lurk in this strange drug? However, a look at Mr. Tempest's eager and determined expression of face availed to restrain him. So he watched the stockbroker as he took the wrapper off the mysterious bottle.

"Let us see now, Pettigood," said Mr. Tempest; "one must not expect too much. Sir George said that he would not and could not call it a specific."

Perhaps he expected here some sign of encouragement, which was not forthcoming, from his clerk, for it was with rather an overbearing

air, as if he had suddenly become counsel opposing himself, that he continued :—

“ But, on the other hand, he *did* say that it sometimes worked marvellous cures, hey, Pettigood? ”

Pettigood still maintained a *morne silence*, and Mr. Tempest talked, almost rattled on :—

“ So that we may really hope for some little good effect—don’t you think so, Pettigood, don’t you think so? ”

And this time he was so insistent that the confidential clerk felt compelled to reply; which he did in these uncomfortable words :—

“ I trust, sir, that the result may be as fortunate as you appear to anticipate.”

“ Ah, Pettigood! ” rejoined the stockbroker, “ you were always a bit of a croaker, but at any rate there’s no harm in trying. Now, let me see. What is the amount for a dose? ” And with this he looked again more scrutinisingly at the bottle. “ Why, good gracious! ” he cried, “ there’s a great blob of sealing-wax fallen on the directions. Do you see, Pettigood, do you see? ”

“ Yes, sir, ” said Pettigood, his face lengthening as he in turn looked closely at the bottle. “ I see. Mr. Mairey, the chemist, must have

given the bottle to be done up to some inexpert assistant while he talked to me about hay fever, for which he believes there is no cure. Now, if my——”

“If your grandmother were alive,” burst in Mr. Tempest, “I should certainly consult her. There, there, forgive me, Pettigood, but this accident is really most annoying.”

“For my part, sir, I should be disposed to regard it as an omen and take warning by it.”

“Nonsense, Pettigood, nonsense! Faint heart certainly never cured hay fever, and surely I can remember what Sir George said about the dose. Let me consider. Was it—hey, Pettigood?”

“I have no means of knowing, sir. For my part, I should be disposed——”

“Nonsense, Pettigood, nonsense! It would be sinning one’s mercies not to try it. Was it ten drops? No, not ten. I think he said something about twenty drops! I’m sure he said something about twenty drops. He must have said twenty drops was the dose! There’s no doubt about it! Not the shade of a shadow of a doubt!”

Thus spoke Mr. Tempest, bolstering up with brave words an assurance which, to speak by

the card, he was far enough from feeling, the while Pettigood watched him with apprehension growing to dismay.

"So here goes!" continued the stockbroker, with forced joviality. "Twenty drops it is; twenty drops it shall be!" Then, holding the bottle and a measuring-glass, which Pettigood had brought him, he began to count drop by drop: "One—two—three—" and so on, till he was getting within measurable distance of twenty, as Pettigood was of terror. Suddenly a mighty sneeze, which had been for some time impending, shook him from top to toe, so that all count was lost in its throes.

"There, now," exclaimed Pettigood, and it was in his mind to complete the sentence with "you have been and gone and done it!" but his voice refused to carry so disrespectful a message; *vox faucibus hæsit*, and he stood silent and agape. The while Mr. Tempest, annoyed, obstinate, angry, and to tell the truth a little alarmed, swallowed at a gulp the draught his own rashness had prepared, as if to forestall any colder and wiser reflection. Then—"Pettigood," he said, as if taking the words out of the clerk's mind, "I've done it."

"That, sir," replied Pettigood recovering from the torpor of timidity, "that at least is certain."

"You mean," said Mr. Tempest somewhat unsteadily, "that the result is as yet uncertain. Well,"—he paused with a fatuous air, and seemed to be searching for a word, "if—er—um—what I mean to say is this—if you fellows could only understand"—then, suddenly catching sight of Pettigood's face now full of undisguised alarm, he drew himself up to his full height, gave one short *staccato* laugh, and in a cold masterful voice, dwelling cuttingly on each syllable, he continued: "It would be superfluous and idle, Pettigood, to discuss further an incident which is happily closed."

Pettigood groaned.

"I repeat, happily closed. And now to business. I really must answer Whistler & Co. I will ring when I have finished the letter. And remember, Pettigood, *happily closed*."

And, as Pettigood went out, pressing his hand to his brow as one dazed, and muttering to himself "Happily closed! O lor'!" Mr. Tempest sat down majestically in his official chair.

Instead, however, of taking up his pen to Whistler & Co., he leant back, and a smile stole over his face, vaguely and weakly at first, but gathering in strength by degrees, until it resembled that portrayed in a well-known advertisement which represents a smile indelible. Then "By Gad!" he said to himself, "I believe that stuff of George's is doing me good already. I certainly feel less like Fascination Fledgeby in *Our Mutual Friend* after Mr. Lammle had crammed salt and snuff into his throat and nostrils, and I declare it's some minutes since I've coughed or sneezed! And certainly—yes, there's no doubt about it—I really have lost that nasty, chippy, hot-dry-nose kind of feeling that's worried me till now ever since I waked up in the middle of the night, or morning, with my eyes streaming like the *grandes eaux* at Versailles."

Here Mr. Tempest kicked out his legs under the official table and gently chuckled. "Let me see," he continued in a sort of cooing soliloquy, "what was the phrase I used to describe my feelings? A very happy one I thought at the moment. Ha! I have it; a hot-dry-nose sort of feeling. Capital! Hits it off exactly, to a

hair, eh? a hair of the dog that—no! that's something quite different. All the same, hot-dry-nose *is* what they say of dogs. And, come to think of it, I was a dog once when I was up at the 'Varsity, no end of a dog!" Here he laughed, then frowned as if at an interruption, and then resumed more quietly: "There certainly is no doubt that this stuff is having a most beneficial effect upon me. I really must tell Pettigood. He and his grandmother, indeed!"

He rang his bell decisively, and to Pettigood said quite distinctly, but all in one breath: "Pettigood Sir George's stuff is an elixir quite an elixir you may go no stop a bit don't you see I've got something of the very utmost importance to say at once?"

"Sir!" exclaimed Pettigood, as well he might, and stood stock still and staring. The stockbroker stared at him in turn, with a child-like and innocent surprise.

"You look astonished," he said, this time quite slowly and reflectively. "There is really nothing to wonder at. Something, I forget what, happened to remind me of the days of my youth; perhaps it was the visit of those two

young people, I know not, but certainly it is borne in upon me that we are too remote from youth in this office. We ought to have more vivacity, more bustle. I should like," this with a kind of plaintive interrogation, "I should like very much to see *you* bustle, Pettigood?"

"Me, sir," cried the unhappy Pettigood, "me, Mr. Tempest? Oh! my dear master, can it be that Sir George Paston's stuff was some horrid narcotic and has—has in short disagreed with you? And," he hurried on, "Mrs. Sapley may arrive at any moment!"

"Mrs. Sapley! Aha!" exclaimed the stock-broker, with a lively and cunning look. "Do you know, Pettigood, that I was a terrible flirt in my young days?"

"The question, sir, seems irrelevant," faltered Pettigood.

"Not at all," answered the other gaily; "and once a flirt always a flirt. Boys will be boys, as Charles Mathews used to say."

"But, sir," said Pettigood, "it was in *My Awful Dad* he used to say it."

"Dad me no dads," rejoined Mr. Tempest. "I feel young and active again. I believe I could run, jump, play leap-frog. Pettigood,

give me a back!" he cried imperiously; and as Pettigood did not obey the command, he made a too impulsive leap over a chair and landed full against Pettigood. Both reeled at the shock, and had hardly recovered themselves when there was a knock at the door. Mr. Tempest gasped a "Come in!" and a clerk appeared to say, "Mrs. Sapley to see you, sir."

"Directly," answered the stockbroker, who, as the clerk vanished, turned on Pettigood and said most unjustly: "There, you see what you've done! If only you had given me a back, and had not mentioned that admirable lady, Mrs. Sapley, at that particular moment, this could not have occurred. Give me a brush and comb from that drawer, quick! There," he said as he hurriedly brushed his hair before the mantelpiece mirror, "that's better. Put them back; Richard's himself again. We will see Mrs. Sapley. Let her be admitted."

As Pettigood departed in grief-stricken amazement, the stockbroker assumed an attitude of caricature dignity as he stood in front of the empty grate, tapped himself on the breast, and had barely said to himself in self-confident tones, "None but the brave deserve the fair," when

Mrs. Sapley was shown in, and he advanced to meet her with an inbred but now slightly exaggerated air of courtliness. Now, as to Mrs. Sapley, the first thing to strike a stranger concerning her was her hat—a hat to which the ordinary *matinée* hat was but as a fleeting phantasm of a fitful ghost. Therein, moreover, were flowers of every kind and of every hue—flowers big, flowers small, flowers red, flowers green ; a veritable garden of flowers, but hardly a garden which any one would describe as “the garden I love”. The hat-garden (for it was certainly much more than a garden-hat) was worn in season and out of season, and it covered a head and a face which were neither in season nor out of season, but were vague and undefined except for two things, eyebrows which looked determined and a mouth which looked silly.

To this personage advanced Mr. Tempest with the somewhat too emphasised courtesy above implied, but to Mrs. Sapley there appeared to be no undue stress of compliment in the roguishly pompous air with which the stockbroker greeted her, saying, “Madam, I am truly rejoiced to see you. Your visit re-

sembles that of Flora to the internal, I mean infernal, gods!"

To this Mrs. Sapley made no verbal reply. She was too occupied with displaying three accomplishments, the knowledge of which alone proved her to be no chicken—namely, simpering, bridling and curtseying.

"I am not clear," continued Mr. Tempest with a moment's perplexity, "if such a visit ever took place, but for the comparison to Flora, that's all right. I'll be—ahem! I shall be much surprised if it isn't!"

"Oh, Mr. Tempest! Such kindness!" rejoined the lady, "and yet they say you can think and talk of nothing but business!"

"Business!" cried the other loudly. "Business be——" then, pulling himself up with ludicrous gravity, "business *be*, as they say in the West country, where I was brought up" (this was strictly untrue), "and where they say *be* for *is*, a very important matter, and I am here to attend to your commands concerning it. Mustn't," he added to himself, "go too fast all at once in paying court to this charming person," and so motioned to a comfortable chair, while he again installed himself severely in his official

place. "And now, madam," he said, "for your commands."

"Well, Mr. Tempest," the lady said, as the simper changed to an eager gambling look, "What about my Mesopotamians?"

"To be sure, Mesopotamians; we will see." He rang for Pettigood. "Mr. Pettigood," he asked, as the confidential clerk appeared, "what is the last quotation about Mesopotamians?"

"Eighty-nine one-eighth, sir," answered Pettigood, adding to himself as he disappeared, "Thank heaven he seems to be quite himself again."

"Oh! Mr. Tempest," cried Mrs. Sapley clasping her hands, "what does that mean?"

"It means, madam," replied Mr. Tempest, still strictly business-like, "it means, I much regret to say, a loss of five pounds four shillings and tenpence-halfpenny on the fluctuations of the day."

Mrs. Sapley's face fell and puckered, an ominous sign which Mr. Tempest noticed, insomuch that without any gradation his business manner changed to one of intense sympathy.

"Mrs. Sapley," he said, "dear Mrs. Sapley," then to himself, "Ah! ha! we are getting on!" and then resumed, "Surely the disaster cannot be great. Consider! Five pounds four and tenpence-halfpenny! It cannot be so *very* great?" There was an absolutely wheedling intonation on the *very* which invited, and obtained, confidence.

"Oh, Mr. Tempest!" said the lady, scarce hiding a sob, "it's not only that—I wish it were! But I lost fifty pounds last week, and I so counted on a rise in Mesopotamians that I borrowed twenty pounds with one of my laughs, Mr. Tempest, from the Professor this morning; and though he can be very kind, he can be stern, even violent! And he will be," cried the poor lady in a burst of naturalness, "he will be, as sure as my name is Arabella Georgina!"

"Arabella Georgina!" exclaimed Mr. Tempest with emotion, "my secretly favourite names." (At this Mrs. Sapley again bridled through a suspicion of tearfulness.) "If the devotion"—he was about to say, reminiscent of old-fashioned plays, "of a lifetime," but just in time substituted—"of a stockbroker can be of any use to you, why, it is entirely at your service."

"Oh, Mr. Tempest!" rejoined the lady, with the dawning of a conscious smile, "your kind sympathy I'm sure—what person of sensibility could be unmoved by it? And the loss in money is not so ruinous in itself, but it's when I think of the Professor!" and here her face puckered ominously again.

"Why, ah! why think of him? Why not think of somebody else? Of me, for instance? Here I am! And a stitch in time—I mean," cried Mr. Tempest, again pulling himself up with an effort, "in time of trouble one turns naturally to friends for comfort, confidential friends; and who can be so confidential and comforting as your stockbroker?"

Mrs. Sapley was too agitated and too impressionable to note anything in his speech except a general desire to be sympathetic and attentive, and, therefore, replied in an emotional voice :—

"Oh, Mr. Tempest! thank-you for your kindness again. I really don't know what I should do without it!" and here, as she herself might have said, humid drops (how drops could be dry one does not well understand) trembled beneath her eyelids.

"Tears!" exclaimed her companion excitedly, "tears from Sir Hubert Stanley, that is from Arabella Georgina! Perish the thought! Let there be no thinking. At least, no thinking of him! Who," he continued in a wild aside to himself, which passed unheard by Mrs. Sapley, "who would have thought the old stockbroker had so much flirt in him?"

"But," cried Mrs. Sapley, in whom vanity had banished tearfulness, "I *must* think of him! Why," as she opened her eyes wide, half in alarm, half enjoying what seemed a romantic situation, "he may be here at any moment."

"Here! He!" cried Mr. Tempest, startled for a moment into himself, and then, as the impish influence resumed its sway, he resumed with a fine scorn, "Let him come! Qu'il vienne! Que nous viennions! Que vous Viennois—no, that's wrong, and I really must collect myself, I seem all in pieces! Mrs. Sapley!" and here he succeeded in pulling the pieces together for a space, "what do you mean? Why should he, Professor Sapley, come here?"

"About a burglary," she answered; "that is—I mean—he thinks it's a burglary—the things

are missing—some jewels from a mummy I gave him, and he happened to hear from Sir George Paston that you knew some of the authorities at New Scotland Yard, and he thought he might get good advice from you. He was coming here with me, but I was so anxious to see you about my investments ; he knows nothing about them. I made an excuse of shopping ; he was to follow me—and, oh, dear ! as I said, he may be here at any moment, and what am I to do ? ”

It will be perceived that Mrs. Sapley's excitement and love of a situation had blinded her to the fact that, as they had arranged to meet at the office, it was the most natural thing in the world that Professor Sapley should find her there. And for reasons beyond her ken (and his own for that matter) Mr. Tempest, who had now passed into a phase of what seemed like icy calm, answered impressively :—

“ Mrs. Sapley, we must be guided by circumstances, or say, rather, we must mould them to our will.”

Hardly were the words out of his mouth when a shrill and penetrating voice was heard through the door (which by good or bad luck had remained

slightly open) saying, "If you would kindly explain to Mr. Tempest."

"Heavens!" cried Mrs. Sapley, "my husband!"

"Would not on any account interrupt him," said the voice.

"What shall I do?" implored Mrs. Sapley, wringing her hands.

"Be guided by me," said Mr. Tempest ringing the bell.

"If it is not too inconvenient," said the voice.

Pettigood entered. Mr. Tempest eyed him commandingly, and pointed also commandingly to the door. Pettigood shut it.

"Pettigood," said Mr. Tempest, in cold clear tones, "when I ring again show Professor Sapley in. I am quite alone."

Pettigood blanched, and stared first at Mrs. Sapley and then at his master.

"I am quite alone," repeated Mr. Tempest in icy accents, and then pointed again to the door.

Pettigood disappeared, quivering.

Mr. Tempest eyed Mrs. Sapley sternly, and pointed to the window recess.

Mrs. Sapley meekly obeyed his gesture.

Mr. Tempest drew a pair of chintz curtains together across the recess.

Mr. Tempest rang the bell.

Pettigood entered, showing in Professor Sapley, cast a furtive and horror-stricken look round the room, and went out like a family spectre. Professor Sapley, shrill, nervous, strongly built, learned, excitable, found himself facing a very stockbroker-looking Mr. Tempest, who, with grave urbanity, indicated a chair with the words, "Pray take your seat," and himself sat down in the revolving chair which had supported him through so many changes of mood.

"I had half hoped," said the Professor, "to find Mrs. Sapley here."

"Ah!" replied Mr. Tempest. "No, I am quite alone." He spoke the words with a kind of chuckle, and hastily added, "Mrs. Sapley is, I may say, known to me as a bold speculator."

"My wife a speculator!" exclaimed the astonished Sapley.

"I was about to say," said the other blandly, "a speculator in the possibilities of woman's sphere of activity."

"Hum! ha!" said Mr. Sapley. "I believe she has published a pamphlet or so—at her own expense; but I had no idea they were well known. Between ourselves they are poor stuff." There was a movement with rustling in the chintz curtains. The Professor glanced at them for a moment and continued: "But your time, like mine, is valuable. I ventured to call, hearing from your and my friend, Sir George Paston, that you might kindly give me some information."

"What about?" asked Mr. Tempest (whose thoughts and looks had been fixed on the curtains), so sharply and brusquely that the Professor gave a nervous start as he replied:—

"Well—er—I—you see, we Egyptologists are sometimes but poor business men."

"Oh! very!" said Mr. Tempest, still quite absent-minded.

"What an odd manner!" said the Professor to himself, and then to Tempest, "so hearing from Paston that you knew all about Scotland Yard, I thought it might in the end expedite matters if I called *here* before going *there*. You see, there appears to have been a mysterious robbery at my house."

"Robbery!" cried Mr., Tempest quite suddenly and sitting bolt upright. "That's me."

"You!" exclaimed the Professor, who began to think that Mr. Tempest was something more than odd.

"Aha!" said the other, looking shrewd, "not stockbrokerly, of course, but you could not have come to a better place for information. You might have known that from Mrs. Sapley."

Here the curtains rustled so violently that the Professor, his attention thus a second time called to them, passed unnoticed the reference to his wife, and said nervously :—

"Is there not a singular draught from those curtains—I am so subject to cold—surely a very strong draught?"

"Draught! Strong draught? Yes, to be sure, for hay fever. Not for curtains."

The appalling irrelevancy of this answer could hardly have passed unnoticed by the Professor but that his attention, already caught by the curtains, was now fixed upon them by reason of a remarkable noise which seemed to come from the space behind them. Any person who has heard another person strenuously engaging, and partly succeeding, in an effort to stifle a

small but insistent cough, knows the distressing kind of gulping and yelping which is apt to be the result. Just such a noise the uncomfortable and wondering Professor now heard, and in consequence turned his gaze questioningly and anxiously on Mr. Tempest, who looked back at him with a quizzical but perfectly benignant expression.

"I beg pardon," said the Professor, and the noise stopped almost as he opened his mouth, "but did I not hear a singular noise just now?"

The stockbroker smiled blandly and said, rather in the manner of a benevolent lecturer, "Noise, my dear sir, is a very deceptive thing, wherein it differs from such pursuits as you and I habitually follow. The impression of noise, I am told, is sometimes due to a slight disturbance in the delicate mechanism of the ear. This may be the consequence, frequently temporary, of more or less overwork."

"Overwork!" cried Sapley, with a mixture of self-importance and irritation in his tone. "Overwork! The amount of work which I get through may be, perhaps is, abnormal. But brain power is differently distributed in different individuals, and I really cannot imagine that in

my case there can be undue tension, still less such a resultant illusion. I am perfectly certain I heard a noise. It was not unlike the muffled yapping of a small dog. Could there be a dog concealed in the room?"

Mr. Tempest paused but a second, and then, as in his former speech he had chameleon-like caught a touch of pedantry from the mere neighbourhood of the Professor, so he now suddenly assumed a humouring kind of voice and manner to make reply.

"A dog?" he said, "a dog here? Surely not. At this time"—he glanced at the clock—"all well-conducted canine folk are in their appointed place, which I take to be neither more nor less than the Isle of Dogs."

This answer removed all doubt as to Tempest's more than oddness from the mind of Sapley, who fidgeted in an alarmed manner, but could find nothing to say but "Gracious Powers!" while he looked secretly towards the door. Mr. Tempest noticed this, and resumed in a brisk off-hand way, which for a brief moment reassured the other:—

"You will understand, of course, that in these matters I rely mainly on information received.

And that reminds me of New Scotland Yard and of your inquiry. And in answer to that, by far the best thing you can do is to go to Scotland Yard, mention my name—well known to the police—and ask for Hawley, Mark Hawley, the detective. He's the man for you. Detects everything. Knew all about my cook! Indeed, as Mrs. Sapley has remarked——”

The Professor, now nearly beside himself, broke in with, “Really, my dear sir!” Then, as the curtains seemed to be seized with a paroxysm of rustling, and the mysterious noise began again, his agitation and bewilderment impelled him strongly towards them, and crying: “Those curtains, Mr. Tempest, those curtains!” he pulled them asunder, with much of the violence Mrs. Sapley had imputed to him, and revealed Mrs. Sapley herself, frightened and angry.

The Professor uttered but two words: “Arabella Georgina!” but there was a world of meaning in them.

The only one of the three personages concerned who appeared completely unmoved was Mr. Tempest, who said under his breath with a chuckle: “The screen scene in *The School*

for Scandal, as I live!" Then, as the other two began to find their voices, and that *fortissimo* and *insieme*, he stepped quietly to the door, met Pettigood entering, and saying to him quietly, "Pettigood, I shall take your hat and overcoat. You stay and see what happens—it will amuse you," he promptly disappeared.

CHAPTER IV.

MR. TEMPEST, when he found himself in the street, having let himself out of the office by the private door unbeknown to any one save Pettigood, stopped, drew a long breath, chuckled softly. Then "It is lucky," he said to himself, "that Pettigood's hat and coat fit me so well, though to be sure the hat *is* a little exiguous." As a matter of fact, it looked rather as though it had perched rakishly and by chance on Mr. Tempest's somewhat massive head.

"Pettigood! Aha! Poor Pettigood! At this moment he might be sunning himself, *vice* Henry Tempest gone away"—here he gave a kind of hoarsely whispered view holloa, and chuckled again—"in the smiles of Mrs. Sapley—and a mons'ous fine woman she must have been—but unluckily for Pettigood, there's Mister the Professor to be reckoned with. Well, after all, reckoning is Pettigood's trade, and he's

reckoned pretty good at it, so let 'em fight it out and *vogue la galère!*"

"Do you know," he continued, still muttering to himself, "that play on the word *reckon* is rather amusing? It makes me inclined to say—*How do you do, Eisenkopf?*" The italicised words were spoken suddenly aloud, and addressed by Mr. Henry Tempest in his best business manner to a City magnate who passed at the moment. The incident gave pause to his wandering fancy, and when he resumed his self-communing it was with his mind's voice only (if a mind's eye, why not a mind's voice?) that he proposed the question, "What shall I do next? It must be getting on for luncheon-time. Shall I lunch at one of my clubs? And, if so, which, and why, and why not another, and which of them? Come, come, this won't do; it's pleasant and juvenile—doosid juvenile—but it seems somehow to lack decision and purpose. No, I will not go into clubland, for this is a joke which I really must keep entirely to myself—joke and I and nobody by—so rather let me seek out some humble place of entertainment where I am not likely to be known, and then consider my plans."

With some little difficulty and peregrination, and always furtively looking about to see that he was not observed, insomuch that a young policeman, failing (as doubtless a more experienced officer would not have failed) to recognise his highly respectable back and walk, followed him suspiciously until he caught sight of the face of the model stockbroker, Mr. Henry Tempest found a quiet-looking and retiring place of entertainment, which he thought might afford him in peace the modest chop and glass or two of light port from the wood which he proposed to allow himself for luncheon. He entered, and was handed an old-fashioned bill of fare, from which he ordered his old-fashioned repast. While the waiter was away issuing commands, it struck Mr. Tempest that the proprietor's name—Zembald Perkins—at the head of the bill was a trifle out of the way. This set him off into a dreamy musing, the upshot of which was that his memory carried him from the name Perkins to the ball given by a lady of the same name as described by Mr. Thackeray.

Thus, when the waiter returned with his chop and dwarf decanter of port, the stock-

broker, with the look and tones of one indulging himself in a pleasant reverie, said softly: "So the name is Perkins," and straightway proceeded to quote, still gently murmuring, "Well, that rhymes with jerkins, my man of firkins; so don't let us have any more shirkings and lurkings, Mr. Perkins."

The waiter, surprised for once out of habitual stolidity, stared long (one might almost add "and loud") at Mr. Tempest. The waiter caught the speaker's eye, and the eye became that of a person suddenly awaked to the consciousness of an amazing action.

"Dear me!" said the stockbroker, turning rather red. "Dear me, Zemb—I mean John," he continued, hitting the right or at any rate the by-right of prescription name at his second venture, "dear me! The memory plays one strange tricks at times. A little entertainment that the children"—"whose children?" he asked himself as the words came halting from his mouth—"are getting up, a scrap of it which in this moment of relaxation came into my mind; but I had no idea that I was speaking aloud, as I evidently must have done. Tut, tut! Pray let me ask you to join me in a glass of this

excellent light port, which I am sure is precisely what my doctor would approve for my gouty tendencies."

The speech, with its old-school politeness and accompanied as it was by its appropriate action, served to dispel, happily, the alarms of the sedate John, and served also to recall Mr. Tempest, for a time, more or less completely to himself. He went through his luncheon, that is, in a mood near akin to that of a person who in the early (or late) morning wakes up just enough to know that he is asleep and to take joy in the knowledge. And here what an opportunity presents itself for a few pages of metaphysical descant upon the various intermediate states between sleeping and waking, and their why and wherefore! But, and perhaps our readers, if any, may not regret the fact, such digressions are not for us. We have to attend to Mr. Tempest. He, good man, might—who knows?—have waked up gradually but entirely from his state of dreamy beatitude to a full perception of all that had befallen him. He might then, with the aid of the faithful Pettigood and Sir George Paston, have set straight all the things that had gone crooked.

This and other things which did not happen might have come to pass quite naturally but for one of those unforeseen and impish calamities which seemed destined to overtake him.

Just after he had called for his reckoning, and the sedate John had gone to fetch it, Mr. Tempest suddenly felt a tickling in the top of his nose. "Heavens!" he said to himself, "this is the herald of another sneeze. No time must be lost. Prevention is better than cure," and therewith pulling the flask from his pocket, he poured out what he thought a proper dose into his wineglass and had drunk it and restored the flask to his pocket before the waiter returned with his bill.

The immediate effect which the draught had on its recipient was to produce a singular clearness of vision and decision. This he thought, and sternly suppressed a gleam of amusement at the coincidence that the two words rhyme even while he paid the bill and gave the waiter man a true *largesse*, coupled with another jocular yet altogether dignified reference to the playful pranks of memory.

When he had walked, still with a debonair dignity, into the street, he first reflected

"Honest John—why do so many of them answer to that name?—thinks that I am the father or uncle—it could hardly be grandfather no!—of a large family of merry children making midsummer holiday. Well, forgive us our sins! But that was a very small one, and helped me out of a small but embarrassing difficulty. Mr. Henry Tempest talking like that to a waiter! To be sure it would never do! Ha, presence of mind is a great matter; and that reminds me."

At this point he hailed a passing four-wheeler, a vehicle which, chiefly on account of long-leggedness, he had from his youth up preferred to a hansom.

He told the man to go to Waterloo, remembering with perfect correctness that he would just hit off a train which would take him to the station for Sir George Paston's house so that he would have the pleasant part of a summer afternoon and evening to spend as he liked before dinner. His valise he calculated also correctly would have been looked after so as to meet him at the station, with or without his man to see him off.

Now it so happened (and surely there again

was evidence that the Imp of the Perverse had joined forces with the Bottle Imp against Mr. Henry Tempest) that the stockbroker's man, using the discretion wisely reposed in him by his master, had, indeed, taken the valise, which was, in fact, a dressing-bag neither new nor old, marked with a red star, to the station, but had there left it in charge of a porter, thinking it best to return himself to the stockbroker's house, there, with the housekeeper, to keep watch and ward in consequence of recent depredations. The porter, having received minute instructions, was on the look-out for Mr. Henry Tempest, and put him into a carriage in company with a dressing-bag, neither new nor old, marked with a red star. Beyond the fact that the pleased young porter got a double tip, nothing came of the discretion of the stockbroker's man until about a quarter of an hour out of London, when the train, having stopped for two minutes at Scrattage, where no one got in, started on what, with the exception of a brief halt for the examination of tickets, was a clear run for a little short of an hour to Three-Mile Hollow, the station for Sir George Paston's place. Then Mr. Tempest, alone with the dressing-bag,

feeling again a pleasant sense of youthful exhilaration, bethought himself that the moment had arrived to read an evening paper, with an *obbligato* accompaniment of one of his own particular cigarettes.

Wherefore he pressed the spring, opened the bag, and straightway found himself looking at a piece of paper neatly pasted on the dividing compartment and covered with handwriting which was neither his own nor that of his man. Then, with a natural curiosity, he proceeded to read, with but mild surprise, the following words :—

“*Mem.* Make-up for retired Anglo-Indian colonel who has held civil appointment. Fifty-six or fifty-seven ; moustache only. Slightly tanned—not yellow—complexion (see powder in packet with moustache) ; lines round eyes very delicate ; dust with special powder (see packet) ; darken eyebrows ; firm but gentle (see crayon in packet) ; walk dignified but springy.” “Springy !” said Mr. Tempest to himself, “I’m the boy for that !” “Wear coat habitually open. Grey tie, with pearl pin to match, in separate packet.”

“Why,” cried Mr. Tempest again, “I was

made for the part, or the part for me! This is a game! It reminds me—how it does remind me of the early days of the A.D.C.! How well I remember it all, and our *facile princeps*—the only begetter, etcetera—a merry soul he was and is to be sure! Bless my heart the opportunity is too good to neglect. No trouble about the age, no need for lining. On the contrary, perhaps just the slightest touch of rouge with the tan, for business does make a man look older than he feels. Certainly these pearls—not so bad that, as there is a pearl pin—must not be cast before swine—no, no! To work, Henry! It needed but this to make it a regular Arabian Nights' day—if you will pardon a paradoxical expression," he added, bowing to nobody, with an odd relapse into his business manner. "To work!" and suiting the action to the word he opened the packets indicated in the manuscript. "A very masterpiece of Clarkson's art!" he exclaimed, as, with the aid of some spirit-gum and a hand-glass which lay together in the bag, he assumed the beautifully finished moustache. "A wig, too! Grey—but I'm well thatched and shan't want that. Lucky I've kept my hair on. Wonder if George will

keep *his* on when he sees me! Ho, ho! But stay—a new brush and comb—ha! part my hair in the middle and brush it back to make a difference—that's it. Boots—'fash'nable but dear,' no doubt—so are mine. Always was celebrated for my foot! *Ex pede Tempestatem!* No need for the boots! This really is most enjoyable. Tie and pin! Good! clothes, ha! Trousers—very like my own—needn't change them, besides it might be awkward if a ticket-inspector came round."

As if the fear, or let us rather say the prudent apprehension, were father to the fact, at this moment the train, which had been slowing down without Mr. Tempest perceiving it, stopped, and simultaneously he felt one side of his new moustache loosen itself, droop, and drop flaccid over his mouth. He heard the ticket-inspector's footfall, he heard the ticket-inspector's demand approaching his compartment. With a swift coolness he clapped his handkerchief to the side of his face which had suffered loss, and assumed the attitude of one racked by violent toothache. In this guise he met the visit of the inspector, who, being a humane man, and perhaps also being impressed by the air of dignity which was

inseparable from Mr. Tempest, made sincere apologies, with explanations, for disturbing the supposed sufferer. The reply which he got was so full of gentleness and nobility untouched by adversity that as he went on his way along the footboard he said to himself: "A very affable, understandable gent that as ever I met; but he does seem to have the toothache cruel bad." While Mr. Tempest, again left alone, reflected that the mishap and his own readiness of resource in dealing with it afforded a striking illustration of the method adopted by Robinson Crusoe in casting up accounts with good and evil fortune. As soon as the train began to move again he re-fixed the erring moustache with double care, and resumed his attention to a change of costume.

"Coat and waistcoat—a shade more worldly and less Stock Exchangey than my own, so on they go. And now," he looked at as much of himself as he could see in the hand-glass, "a veritable transformation, I declare!" Then he chuckled, lay back, and offering the incense of a cigarette to his new self, gave himself up for a time to a pleasant maze of memories and fore-castings of enjoyment, until, when the cigarette

came to an end, he started up, exclaiming :
"Getting near the station now! Must pack my coat and waistcoat in the bag and fasten it up again—so! And then—why then, ha, ha, we'll wait the event, and that's the humour of it!"

Thus it came to pass that when the train stopped at Three-Mile Hollow there stepped down from it, holding a leather dressing-bag with an alert air, a dignified personage no longer in his first youth who was obviously, if anything too obviously, a retired Anglo-Indian official. Him eyeing addressed, with an air of satisfaction at his own penetration, a dapper young servant in livery, with the words: "Beg pardon, sir; you the gentleman that was expected?"

"To be sure," rejoined the seeming Anglo-Indian benignly; and then, following the servant, got into a carriage which was in waiting and drove off in a state of boyish exultation and expectation.

CHAPTER V.

MR. TEMPEST, it will be remembered, when he left his office left also his confidential clerk, Edward Pettigood, in charge of a chaos (which had come not again but entirely anew into the stockbroker's sanctum) with the parting and cruelly flippant observation that it might amuse Pettigood to see what happened.

Pettigood, it should here be stated, had secretly and for a long time cherished, in his unofficial hours, a devout admiration for the Napoleonic genius, allied with a half-acknowledged conviction that there was in him something more than a touch of this genius, latent but not the less existent. He pictured it to himself as a hidden spring which one day would gush forth into a brilliant forceful stream. He felt, when Mr. Tempest left the office, that this day maybe had come, and that it was for him to rise to so great an occasion. Therefore he

did *not* "smile at" his employer's "witticism," but he *did* "forgive the sarcasm," and he proved himself in a double sense a man of confidence. "Duty and destiny," he murmured to himself as he walked with a dignity befitting the trust reposed in him towards the area of disturbance between Professor and Mrs. Sapley. Neither of these persons had heard the other's violent attempts at recrimination and explanation, and this mattered the less because, in their then state of excitement, neither would have understood had he or she heard a single word. But most naturally when they perceived the advancing Pettigood both by a common impulse turned upon him as if to rend him.

"What!" cried the Professor shrilly, "is my wife about here?" and, almost as though they were performing a duet in canon, Mrs. Sapley broke in on the ante-penultimate word with, "What is my husband about to say next?"

Then, instead of glaring as heretofore at each other, both glared at Pettigood, and again, by a common impulse, both voices joined in the words :—

"Can you tell me?" and, again in undesigned concert, both paused for a reply.

Pettigood was staunch, but he lacked inspiration at this unforeseen conjuncture, therefore he naturally fell back upon commonplace, which perhaps served his turn better than any stroke of genius could have done. For his simple question, "Would you mind telling me what is the cause of difference?" found them as unprepared as he himself had been, and, indeed, fell as a douche of cold sense on the heat of their natural and common attacks. They were astonished into silence. Mrs. Sapley, with feminine quickness, was the first to perceive and use an advantage. "Professor Sapley," she said, looking with conscious superiority at her husband, "asked me to meet him here. He was not here when I arrived. Mr. Tempest kindly received me and engaged me in conversation." Here she stopped dead short, leaving an opening which a person more quick-witted in ordinary affairs than Professor Sapley might at once have turned to her discomfort. But, thus suddenly reminded of the appointment between them which he in the excitement had clean forgotten, even as she a little earlier had forgotten it in the turmoil of vanity and bewilderment, Professor Sapley,

after a moment's pause, found nothing better to say than :—

“To be sure, yes, we did, Arabella Georgina, as you observe, agree to meet here, and for the rest, as to the—ha!——”

“The very trifling matter,” Mrs. Sapley broke in quickly, “which we were discussing when Mr.—”

“Mr. Pettigood, if you please, madam,” said the confidential clerk, demurely.

“To be sure, yes, Mr. Pettigood,” continued the Professor, “yes—well—we really need not trouble Mr. Pettigood about that.”

“No,” said Mrs. Sapley, somewhat incisively, “it is not a matter which need trouble any one at any time,” and thus adroitly did she contrive to seal his lips with words practically stolen from them. The Professor felt that whatever he thought he could not well say any more as to the agitating surmises which had assailed him, and, indeed, he completed his own defeat by replying with nervous hurry :—

“Quite so. Quite so. And the only question that remains is, where is Mr. Tempest?”

“Yes,” chimed in Mrs. Sapley, gently, “where is Mr. Tempest?”

Pettigood the wily, Pettigood the destined, saw that now the winning cards were his. He felt, too, that for the moment he held his two interlocutors in the hollow of his hand.

"Mr. Tempest," he said, with a readiness of phrasing which was new to him, and which he recognised as the outcome of a great situation, "is frequently spoken of as a Model, I may say *the* Model Stockbroker. He is that, fully. But he is much more than that. He is the most discreet of men, and, furthermore, outside his official capacity, one of the most chivalrous, and of the most sensitive disposition."

Professor Sapley looked impressed. Mrs. Sapley sighed, gently.

"He left," continued Pettigood pursuing his advantage, "hurriedly, yet with dignity and consideration. He told me quietly but emphatically" (where, save from a guiding Destiny, gat Pettigood this readiness of lying?) "that important business called him away, he could not tell for how long." Pettigood raised a warning hand lest the others should check the flow of mendacious eloquence. "I was to take charge in his absence and to put everything in order. I think it possible, I may say, knowing

him as I do, that I consider it probable, not to say certain, that his departure was due to that extraordinary delicacy of feeling which I have mentioned. He was upset. He wished to spare—ahem! *others* as much—as much as possible. I was to take charge and put everything in order. It will be an arduous task—very arduous.”

Having thus discharged the last shot from a kind of Maxim of the brain which astonished himself by its sudden spring into existence, Pettigood stared hard and meaningly at the Sapleys, Professor and helpmeet.

How gratified was Mrs. Sapley in the recesses of her heart, and how proud of her chivalrous and delicate admirer! She had been more than woman (which she most certainly was not) if a spice of triumph had been absent from the look which she cast at the Professor, who, such was the effect of Pettigood's eloquence, felt terribly ashamed of himself without knowing exactly why.

As before there was a pause, and, as before, Mrs. Sapley was the first to speak again :—

“Professor,” she said, “it seems to me that there is one way out of a difficulty.” And she

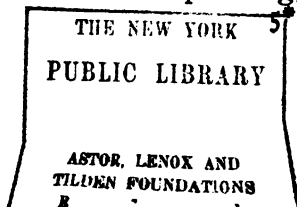
looked, without uttering, the additional words, "created by your outrageous behaviour".

The Professor looked more and more troubled, Mrs. Sapley looked more and more triumphant, though with a secret fear that her triumph could be no more than a passing joy.

The Professor answered, combating a quavering tone with an air of decision.

"Arabella Georgina, there certainly is one way. We must not detain Mr. Pettigood from his grave responsibilities. But, perhaps, Mr. Pettigood's proved knowledge of affairs," here the Professor became almost obsequious, "and unfailing courtesy will give me the information I originally sought—that is to say, the best means of obtaining the best skill to solve the mystery of the burglary at The Grange."

At this speech Mrs. Sapley's look of triumph suddenly vanished for some reason, but the change of expression was not noticed by the Professor or by Pettigood, who answered with such a tempered austerity as he had sometimes observed in his employer, "I believe, sir, that Mr. Tempest places great confidence in Mr. Mark Hawley of the detective police. Should the matter be pressing, I might venture to



recommend a telegram to New Scotland Yard."

"Mr. Pettigood," said the Professor, and again his sentence ended in a duet with Mrs. Sapley, on the words:—

"We are very much obliged to you," and with this they bowed themselves out.

For a time there was between them a silence for which each partner in marriage had private reasons. Then Mrs. Sapley "up and spoke" the simple but suggestive query, "A telegram, do you think?" Professor Sapley, with equal simplicity, replied, "Certainly, a telegram," and from the nearest place of telegrams the Professor sent a message asking as a special favour for Mr. Hawley's presence at The Grange, and suggesting one of two suitable trains. What part this telegram played in the chain of events, of which the first link was forged during the dimness of the small hours in Mr. Tempest's bedroom, will presently be seen by all who are so disposed.

Pettigood, left by himself, resumed with pleasure the Napoleonic mood. He let his head fall on his breast, and then clasped his hands behind him "as if to balance the prone

brow oppressive with its mind," words which he would doubtless have quoted had his knowledge and his memory contained them. Instead of which he said to himself, in a masterful tone, "Thought, tact, action. Thought, for instance, in—in—in thoughtfulness. Tact, in keeping those cat-and-dog Sapleys quiet and persuading the Professor that he was in the wrong. Though in what vagary my master may have indulged who can tell? I fear Sir George Paston and his quackery may have much to answer for. I cannot but think—but thought has done its work, and now for our third item, action. Now, what form should action take? Why, of course, how could it escape me for a moment? I have read somewhere—I certainly have read somewhere—that if fact is sometimes stranger than fiction, fiction often translates itself into fact. So, it was my fiction, surely a wise and benevolent one, that Mr. Tempest (even in self-communing Pettigood never docked the stockbroker of his *Mister*) had left me in charge. Let that become fact! Being in charge, what should I do? Obviously, put some one else in charge and devote myself to the quest, difficult and dangerous it may be, of

my unfortunate master. I must at once inform Goodlad, the clerk next under me (Pettigood swelled again with the sense of responsibility), that the Chief has been suddenly called away—and that is true enough—that I must in his absence absent myself on a confidential mission—and that's not far from the truth—and that Goodlad must take charge of the routine work here for a brief time. And may it, indeed, be brief!"

This aspiration on the part of Pettigood in search of Adventure was perhaps not so entirely sincere as he thought it was. Not the less he proceeded swiftly to put his plan in execution, by putting Mr. Goodlad in possession of his prepared fictions, and then putting himself as best he could into Mr. Tempest's hat and overcoat, and sallying forth to get, also as best he could, on their owner's track.

The telegram sent by the Sapeys duly arrived at New Scotland Yard, and led to Mr. Mark Hawley being instructed by his official superiors to proceed to investigate the burglary at The Grange, Professor Sapley's residence. He had for the time being done all that could be done in the matter of Mr. Tempest's cook,

and was able to catch the earlier of the two trains from Waterloo suggested in the telegram. Now, this train happened to be the very one selected by Mr. Tempest for his journey to dine and sleep at Sir George Paston's House. The two, stockbroker and detective, travelled, unsuspecting of each other's neighbourhood, in very different moods. Mr. Tempest's frame of mind was, as we have seen, made up of many moods, inconstant as the sea, but none of them unpleasant. Hawley's attitude was one and indivisible, and moreover habitual, consisting as it did of intense self-satisfaction. From one piece of work, presenting no difficulties save those which custom rather than imagination had tried to suggest in his necessarily brief interview with the stockbroker, he had passed straight to another as to which he felt convinced that if any difficulties did present themselves he was the man of all others to grapple with them successfully. Therefore, in company with his valise, or dressing-bag which was neither new nor old, which was marked with a red star, and which had been hurriedly thrust into his carriage at the very last moment by a bewildered porter, he was carried towards his destination,

Three-Mile Hollow, in a state of contentment which was helped by an excellent cigar (pressed upon him by Mr. Tempest himself as he left the office) and by the increase in his natural feelings of self-satisfaction and superiority which he derived from beguiling the way by perusing, not for the first time, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*.

When the long arm of coincidence once stretches itself out its reach is apt to be more than equal to that of the spoon needed by one who sups with the official superior of Mephistopheles. Consequently, when Mark Hawley duly arrived at Three-Mile Hollow, and, after delivering his bag to one of the infrequent porters who had gladly noted him as one likely to get out, was about to ask for what in a well-known story is called "an 'ired affair" to take him on to his destination, he became suddenly aware of a private servant, who, assuming that he was an expected guest, showed him respectfully to a private carriage which was in waiting. (It may be noted, as the deed rather of the Imp of the Perverse than of the Long Arm, that the footman and the coachman were both new in the service of Sir George Paston, and that, there-

fore, the personal appearance of the guest, Mr. Tempest, expected at Sanssouci, was as unknown to them as was that of the expected detective to the servants from The Grange. We owe an apology to the practised reader for even mentioning these elementary facts.)

Hawley, then, vastly well pleased by the delicate attention thus vicariously paid to him, stepped nothing loth into the carriage which, as he conceived, was to take him to Professor Sapley's house, there to investigate a burglary, or, as he carefully called it to himself as the carriage rolled smoothly along the road, a supposed burglary. "For," he reflected, "what would that Sherlock Holmes fellow have done? why, he'd have assumed that, burglary or no burglary, the things missing or reported to be missing *are* missing, and on that assumption he'd have acted until a bent pin *or* a cigar-ash that had nothing to do with the case stared him in the face to show that they weren't missing at all. What would a French detective do—ah! it's not for nothing I can read and patter French—why, and mind you Mark Hawley I'm not going by their Gaboriaus and Boisgobeys, but by their Chiefs of Police's memoirs; why, he'd

wait till a Judge of Instruction, pretty instruction, indeed, had got somebody into a cleft stick, and then he'd work on 'information received'. A lot they know about information received! Now, here am I, a plain English detective and proud of it. What do I do? I hear there's been a burglary, well! I don't know of my own knowledge whether there's been a burglary or not. Well, again. And again what do I, Mark Hawley, do? Why, I wait till the clouds roll by. *But* I mark 'em and I note 'em as they *do* roll by, and I tell 'em to say nothing lest it should be used against 'em hereafter. That's what *I* do." And well contented with this method, perhaps not the least sensible of those he had rapidly reviewed in his mind, Mark Hawley was conveyed to the door of the country house which he naturally took to be Professor Sapley's.

Arrived there, he found more servants ready to receive him, to disembarrass him of his valise, and see that it was taken into the room ready for him, and to show him at once, as orders had been given, into the library, "as unluckily everybody was out just for the moment".

"Ah!" said Hawley in his Sir Harcourt

Courtly manner as he accepted the welcome invitation, "naturally one could not expect them indoors on such a beautiful afternoon," and so, with much graciousness, chose, out of various refreshments offered him, a cup of tea, in the "tasting" of which, both in the old and the newer sense of the word, he was pleasantly engaged when, not long after his installation, the library door was opened and there appeared to him Sir George Paston crying, in the first moment, breezily, "My dear Henry," and then, suddenly tailing off *diminuendo* into—"Why—h'm—ha—I must apologise, but——"

"Oh! no need of apology," answered Hawley, readily. "You see the first maxim with me is, never show surprise. So, if Henry is a convenient name, Henry let it be, sir."

"Why," said Sir George, "Henry is, as a matter of fact, the name of a visitor whom I was more or less at this moment expecting to see."

"Now, now," answered Hawley, "I wonder who could have made such a stupid mistake as that. But it's just like them. What am I always saying? Why, if you'll believe me, that there's far too much red tape!"

"That," Sir George began, and was about to add, that it was a complaint habitually made in more than one quarter, but it would have taken a good deal more than a suave interjection to stop the conversational flow once started of Hawley, who therefore continued, "You see, sir, they might have thought of putting Henry Robins on to it, but then, though he's my very good friend, and though I say it that shouldn't, for all that, the job's more in my line than in his. You see, there's a sort of a thing, or a gift, if I may go so far as to say so, that you might call just a delicate touch, if you understand me?" Sir George bowed politely. "And, good as Henry Robins is in his own line, and I don't know a better man in it, yet, put him off his line, if I may use the expression, and where is he? That's the question." Paston, more and more puzzled, but more and more sedulously concealing the fact, bowed again, fully seeing the forlornness of attempting to slide in a word, and Hawley continued. "To be sure they *may* not have known I was available, and, indeed, I was engaged on another matter that's only just been cleared up, and they may have put Henry Robins down as the next

best man, and there the name may have stayed ; and that's what, if you'll allow me to come back to it, I meant by what I said of red tape ; and, as to too much of that being a bad thing, why, sir, who's to doubt it ? ”

“ Who, indeed ? ” echoed Sir George, amiably.

“ But, then,” Hawley went on, “ there's this which quite escaped me in the surprise of the moment, and that is that they'd never have used a Christian name in anything they might say or write. No, no, they wouldn't have done that, and so that leaves me, if I may use the expression, just as much adrift as I was when I started. But it's possible that you, sir, if I may be allowed so to put it to you, might throw some light on this matter. You see the fact is, Professor, we don't know everything, though some folk think that's no more than our duty, and one likes, if I may say so, to know just where one is.”

“ Ah ! ” replied Sir George, delighted by the chance thus at last afforded him of making some attempt to clear up the bewilderment of the situation. “ Yes, my dear sir, you would like, and nothing more natural, to know just where

you are. I think, pardon me if I, am wrong, there may be a little confusion on that point, though in any case I am delighted to see you here. I cannot help imagining from your addressing me as *Professor* that you take me for my not very far-off neighbour, and I may say friend, Professor Sapley?"

"That," replied Hawley, "is, or was, a fact, sir. And now I look again may I substitute for the word *sir* the words Sir George? For, let me tell you, sir, that there's not many of *us* high up, as I may say, at the Yard, that don't know Sir George Paston, the great traveller, by sight."

"My dear sir, you flatter me," replied Sir George, in whom the intuition and diplomacy of the old traveller were naturally and not unpleasingly awakened. "On my side, shall I be far wrong if I associate this unforeseen, but need I again assure you most welcome, visit with an institution which has been justly one of the chiefest bulwarks of our laws, and also with the name of M——"

Now, to say truth, Sir George, though he had now divined his visitor to be an emissary from New Scotland Yard gone astray, was

entirely in the dark as to that visitor's identity, and it was therefore merely to gain time, and, if possible, by any unlikely chance, to conceal his ignorance that he was about to say "the name of Mr——?" when, at the very first breath of the *M* sound, the detective's natural vanity leaped to the rescue as he broke in with:—

"Mark Hawley! Right you are, Sir George. *And* of New Scotland Yard *at* your service."

"Delighted, indeed," said Sir George, "to welcome one whose name," he finished the sentence to Hawley with muttered flatteries, and to himself with: "was till this moment quite unknown to me."

"Ah!" continued the detective swelling with a self-importance always "tickle o' the sere," "Ah! Sir George, it's not to every one I'd give myself away, if I may use the expression, but when I'm dealing with Sir George Paston! Why, sir, what does S'r Alfred say to *us*, of the upper ranks, as I may say? Why, discretion, he says, discretion should be *your* watchword. And discreet, if you'll believe me, and if I may say so, we are!"

Hawley threw his chest forward and looked proudly at Sir George to emphasise his state-

ment, and Sir George, hesitating between boredom and amusement, replied smoothly :—

“Valour and discretion, Mr. Hawley, are not too constantly allied, which makes the combination doubly valuable. And I trust *my* discretion may prove worthy of the trust that *yours* has placed in it. But I feel that my duty as a host, who is greatly obliged to chance for bringing you here, is to ask how I can now best serve your interests. If whatever business you may have with my neighbour, Professor Sapley, should be pressing——”

“And most kind of you it is to think of that, Sir George,” broke in Hawley. “But without violating confidence, if I may go so far as to say so, I don’t think there can be need for putting you out more than to ask you to tell me how to get there within reasonable time. For I may tell *you*, Sir George, that two trains were mentioned to me as suitable, one somewhat later than the one I came by.”

“That’s well,” said Paston, “since I shall not be deprived of my guest’s company almost at the moment of his arrival.”

“But,” added Hawley, “there is another consideration. Our business, if I may so express

myself, Sir George, is to observe and to draw conclusions from observation. Now, shall I be far wrong in supposing that, though you did not expect me, you did expect another guest?"

"My dear sir," answered Sir George, secretly delighted with the detective's evident pride in this truly amazing instance of acumen, "your inference, as I am sure is always the case with you, is absolutely correct. But that guest is one with whom I can venture on liberties. He is, indeed, my *alter ego*, and should he arrive in my absence, will feel himself not the less at home. Therefore, if it suits you we will dine early after a stroll in the grounds, and I will drive you over to The Grange while the long twilight of these pleasant days is yet young."

"Sir George," replied Hawley, in whom satisfaction killed any desire for apologetic long-windedness, "I'm your man."

The necessary orders were given, the two sallied forth for a stroll, during which the course of conversation afforded much self-content to Hawley, and much amusement to Paston, and returned to dress for a very early dinner. Paston, on the way to his own room, insisted on stopping at Hawley's to see that he had everything

he wanted. Hawley, more and more pleased with all this attention, was beginning an elaborate sentence of thanks and assurance of his complete comfort, when, his eyes falling on the things laid out for him to dress, he suddenly interrupted himself with a low whistle.

"Is anything wrong?" asked his host.

"Sir George," answered the guest, "if I have learned one thing it is never to be certain of anything; but sure I am that these are not my things, and," he added more than half to himself, "no sign of that Anglo-Indian get-up."

Half-formed suspicions grouped themselves in Sir George's mind even as the words were spoken; but from old use he gave no sign of them by word or expression, and answered simply :—

"Ha! A tiresome mistake, indeed, the reason of which your quick apprehension will, I am sure, very soon discover. Meanwhile, with your permission, we will dine in morning dress; I will hurry up dinner, and we shall arrive all the sooner at your temporary headquarters, whence you can direct all operations."

"Sir George," cried Hawley, "if I may venture to say so, I was not wrong in setting

you down as a man of action as well as of thought."

"Mr. Hawley," answered Paston, "again you flatter me. I will then expect you in the dining-room in ten minutes, and after dinner we will get over to The Grange."

CHAPTER VI.

It certainly will surprise no one to learn that, with a difference, the circumstances of Mr. Tempest's arrival at the unsuspecting portals of Professor Sapley's house closely resembled those of Mark Hawley's unforeseen descent upon Sir George Paston. Attentive servants (there had been a certain amount of mystery about the expected guest, but not a trace of knowledge of this appeared in their well-schooled voices and faces) received him with smooth alacrity, and took charge of what seemed to be his valise and minor encumbrances. The Butler (a personage so stately that Mr. Tempest at once thought of him as the Chief Butler) informed him that Professor Sapley was most particularly engaged for the moment. Here began the difference between the reception of the disguised Mr. Tempest and that of the undisguised Mark Hawley,

which was part and parcel of the confusion generally found to attend on an interchange of personality, bodily or mental or both. And the difference was continued and marked by the Chief Butler further informing Mr. Tempest that Mrs. Sapley was in the rose-garden, which he pointed out from the steps, and would be very pleased to receive the expected guest during the Professor's temporary seclusion. Wherefore Mr. Tempest, rising to the situation, and looking more Anglo-Indian than life itself, walked with alert dignity towards the rose-garden, while the Chief Butler, retiring pompously to "the room," answered a fire of questions by such remarks as that the gent had given no name, and he, the Butler, had not asked for none, such being his instructions, that the new arrival for his looks and ways was the moral of the Guvnor's second cousin from the Injies, and that he, the Butler, thought it what might be called a rummy start. Pressed by Mrs. Panyer, the housekeeper, to say if he saw in it any connection with all the to-do about some jewels missing from the last new mummy, and if the guest was a Protective, he replied darkly that he might have his own opinions

on many subjects, but that one of them was that duty came first.

Our Anglo-Indian, getting more and more, as he said to himself, "into the skin of the personage," made his way to the rose-garden, where awaited him Mrs. Sapley with another, larger, more grandiose hat, and with a smile which was perhaps a little forced. For, to say the truth, there had been a lively discussion on the way down between the Professor and herself, which was the real reason for his not appearing to welcome the expected Mark Hawley. His nerves had been shattered, and he was giving them such time as he could to recover. She, on her side, for reasons best known to herself, felt that now, if ever, must her nerves be braced to the utmost, and she advanced to meet the distinguished-looking stranger with a smile indeed, but also with the determined look of her eyebrows more marked than usual.

The Anglo-Indian, on perceiving her, raised his hat with a delicate blending of civil and military courtesy which at once appealed to her sympathies, and she opened conversation by saying to him, "You will have heard that

the Professor is unavoidably immersed in business for the moment. But you must try to make the best of me as his deputy, Mr.—Hawley, is it not?”

“So,” said Mr. Tempest to himself, “I’m that sawdust-stuffed idiot Mark Hawley, am I? Very well. I might have guessed it; but anyway, now I know where I am.” To Mrs. Sapley he replied: “Madam, I am indeed honoured. In fact, as we say in the House—I mean in India—I mean, of course, at the Yard—pray forgive me, but the habit of speaking in an assumed character——”

“Oh!” broke in Mrs. Sapley, “no apologies, I beg. I quite understand,” she added with her most winning smile; “when you are once turned into somebody else it must be so difficult to get back again, mustn’t it?”

“Upon my word, madam,” returned Mr. Tempest energetically, “you’re as sharp as a needle. Not but what I always thought so.” He had spoken unthinkingly in his natural voice. Mrs. Sapley had started slightly both at the matter and at the manner of his utterance, and he now hastened to repair the mistake as best he could. “Another slip,” he continued

blandly with his slight drawl of a moment before, "and this time less excusable, for it was into quite another character. The fact is"—and here was indeed a daring stroke on his part—"I have been making a study for professional purposes of a certain eminent man of business—a stockbroker, indeed—and I fancy I dropped into something like his manner for a moment."

"A stockbroker?" said Mrs. Sapley blushing. "Ah! that might account, though to be sure it could hardly—but in short, Mr. Hawley, would it not be a rest for you, and save trouble generally, if you were to drop into your own character and stay in it as long as we are alone together? I feel sure," she added with nods and becks, "you could not better it by any assumption."

"Not better it! Those words from you!" cried Mr. Tempest joyfully, and then, suddenly recollecting himself—"another lapse, but it shall be the last. Mark Hawley, henceforth, to you I am and will remain," and with these words he gave an imitation, as good as he could at short notice, of the detective's most imposing air.

"Well," said Mrs. Sapley admiringly, "it

will be more convenient, but what a wonderful mimic you must be! The manner to the life in those few words! It reminded me so vividly of——” here she paused and blushed.

“Of whom, madam?” inquired the other magisterially.

“Of a dear friend of mine,” replied Mrs. Sapley demurely.

“A dear friend,” said the stockbroker to himself—“that’s good, that’s *very* good;” and then to her, in a Hawleyish way, “Concerning the matter on which my humble services have been requisitioned?”

“Ah!” said Mrs. Sapley falling into the simple trap, “the disappearance of the jewels from the new mummy.”

“*Pre*-cisely,” answered Mr. Tempest, getting interested in the new part thrust upon him. “You speak, I observe, of a disappearance, not of a theft—some mystery, here, perhaps,” he added to himself.

“Why should I speak of it as a theft?” asked Mrs. Sapley defiantly, and then repeated, almost appealingly, “Why should I? Why?”

“Why, indeed?” echoed Mr. Tempest, clean forgetting his assumed character or characters

under the influence of her siren tones, as they seemed to him. "Why should you speak of anything or nothing that you don't entirely choose to speak of? Why should not your path be one of roses—roses all the way?" Seeing her completely astonished look, he went on at headlong pace: "Why should there be any mischief or mystery? Arabella Georgina, further concealment is useless, I am *that* Tempest!" and with this, he struck a melodramatic attitude.

"Oh! Mr. Tempest!" exclaimed the lady, passing quickly from bewilderment to joy, "the very man! How clever of you! Now I shall be freed from all my entanglements and troubles!" and with this she impulsively extended her hand, which he gallantly bent to kiss. "No wonder," she continued, "that I thought your imitation so good, though I am sure you could do it quite as well if you tried, but do tell me how in the very nick of time you happen to be here?"

"That, dear lady—may I say dearest lady?—is just exactly what"—he was going to say *what I was about to ask you*, but dexterously substituted *what I will now explain to you*, and,

with fluent imagination, if in disjointed and Jingle-like words, continued : " Suspected something wrong—the very thought of beauty in distress—fly to the rescue, or unworthy of the name of a British sailor, I mean stockbroker ; and so here we, that is, here I am now, and always at your service !" and with this he dropped alertly on one knee.

" Oh, Mr. Tempest !" exclaimed Mrs. Sapley again, " such thoughtfulness, such chivalry ! But pray get up ; " he did so. " I see it all. You feared the results of this Hawley's interference, and forestalled him by taking his place. How noble of you ! And how prompt in action ! "

" Action ! " repeated the stockbroker, and the word set him off into quite a different mood. " To be sure, that's our cue now. Thinking all done. Did it myself in the train. Now to lay our plans. Whom have you in the house ? "

" Only the Professor, " said Mrs. Sapley, meekly following his lead ; " the others are out. " She did not say, and he did not inquire, what others.

" The Professor, true, " he rejoined ; " I must be introduced to him in the character of

Hawley. But I meant, rather, what available force of able-bodied men for purposes of capture or—or otherwise?" he concluded lamely but rapidly.

"I really hardly know," said Mrs. Sapley.

"Then," Mr. Tempest made answer, "let us go in and see."

"Stay," cried Mrs. Sapley (to say *stop* would have been beneath her), as a sudden look of nervousness came into her face, "here is the Professor coming towards us. I will at once introduce you, as Mr. Hawley, to him, and then" (here wreathed smiles resumed their place) "I shall leave you for the present to his tender mercies instead of mine. Only for the present."

The introduction was swiftly made, and Mr. Tempest was duly handed over to the Professor with information as to the supposed Mr. Hawley's present intentions. Mrs. Sapley expressed a hope that the two gentlemen would soon return, and occupied herself in graceful garden cares.

As the stockbroker and the Egyptologist walked towards the house, Mr. Tempest's attention was attracted by one of the men about

the place, merely because he had an odd, whimsical look. "What is that man's name?" he asked sharply of Sapley, who, peering at the man, replied: "I think that is Goles."

"Ah! a name of good omen," said Mr. Tempest with much gravity. "Let us take him with us."

So said, so done; and the Professor, with the wool completely pulled over his eyes by the stockbroker's double disguise as Hawley in the character of an Anglo-Indian, entered the house accompanied by Tempest and followed by Goles.

As they went in, Mr. Tempest, looking about him and wide awake to the joy of the situation, felt all the delightful irresponsibility of a child, and, moreover, of a child who finds itself suddenly endowed with a seemingly unlimited command of playthings. Hand in hand with this feeling went a keen pleasure in the revival of his old histrionic triumphs and the sense of humour, though not of discretion, proper to his real experience and personality. Altogether, at this moment, Mr. Tempest offered in himself a complete solution of the problem how to be happy though alive.

No wonder, then, that he was singularly vivacious and active. Only one thing might have betrayed that he was not what he seemed—a purposeless and cat-like inquisitiveness; but this, luckily, was accepted as part of the detective instinct and method. Thus, as they passed through the hall, hung on either side with portraits which *might* have been by Lely (and if not by Lely, why then they were by somebody else), “Ancestors?” said Mr. Tempest to Sapley with brisk inquiry. To which word the Professor, rather defiantly than defensively, replied: “Ancestors, yes”. But there was an expression on his face which led the other to suppose he had said the wrong thing. Therefore, with an unhappy desire to make things better, he went on, still in a short, dry manner:—

“Never know where a clue may lie hid. Pictures might, in case of educated criminals, cause disappointment, disappointment cause revenge; in other words, other robberies.” After, instead of before, he had said this he fell to thinking of the speech, and said to himself, “Tickled him up too much, I’m afraid. He probably bought ’em and thought

they were good. Must smooth him down again."

In pursuance of this good resolution, as they passed a kind of lumber-room wherein, as the door was partly open, he discerned rows of Egyptian statuettes on shelves, the concealed stockbroker asked leave to enter, and on its being accorded, permitted himself to indulge in extravagant expressions of admiration.

"Now here," he said, "Professor, is what, perhaps, puts me on a more likely clue. I take it that your priceless collection, to which these things, perfect as they are, form but the merest and feeblest index, may be an object of envy to some Egyptologists?"

"Some?" said the Professor; whose eyes flamed with anger, pride and contempt at the very thought. "You may well say *some*."

"And not all of them, I imagine, absolutely—what shall I say?—scrupulous?" asked Mr. Tempest.

"Scrupulous?" echoed the Professor, and in the word there was such a world of meaning that the other, with the instinct of a true artist, left the effect there and passed on to the end of the long hall. Here he found coats, hats and

suchlike gear hanging up, and, among other things, he noticed a dog-lead and a whistle. He laid a finger on these two objects, and looked inquiringly at Sapley.

"Mrs. Sapley," said the Professor, "for some little time kept a dog, but his barking disturbed my studies, and he was given away to a friend."

At this speech all of the real Mr. Tempest that the Imp of the Perverse had left untouched said to itself, "This man certainly is not worthy to belong to a dog," while the rest of him, masquerading as the detective, said to Sapley, "Pity that. A good yapping terrier might have saved all this trouble. The whistle may come in handy, though." And so saying he took it off its peg and placed it in his pocket.

Just at this point a spirit of quiet satisfaction and contemplation began to take possession of Mr. Tempest, and it is impossible to conjecture to what this might have led had he not been recalled to activity by the Professor, who, after possessing his soul in patience for a minute or two while, as he thought, the detective was lost in anxious deliberation, at last could not refrain from breaking silence with "I beg pardon, but

would you like to inspect the upstairs rooms, or to look at the mummy?"

Mr. Tempest started, and then replied with rapidity and decision as if he were a piece of clockwork suddenly wound up: "Where was the mummy? Much may depend on that."

"It was standing up," said Sapley, "just behind the spot you are now occupying. It has since been moved into the cupboard yonder. Would you like to see it?"

"Not at all," said Mr. Tempest abruptly.

"Nor to look at the rooms upstairs?"

"Still less," was the somewhat ungracious and unexpected reply.

Seeing the effect produced by his words, Mr. Tempest looked cunningly at the Professor, caught him by the lappel of his coat, drew him aside, and said in a mysterious undertone: "You will pardon me, Professor, for my seeming rudeness. The fact is, all my plans may be disarranged, upset—what do I say?—ruined, if the slightest hint of the true manner in which I propose to go to work is dropped or divined by any outsider. To you, Professor, to a person of your great position and fine perception, it is most fitting that all should be made

known in due time. But the moment has not yet arrived, and, meanwhile, not one of your people must have the slightest inkling. Indeed, it is most desirable that you and I should not be noticed in confabulation together. Therefore, if you will permit me to say so—Mum's the word!"

Mr. Tempest again looked very cunning and smiled upon the thoroughly mystified but also thoroughly mollified Professor. "That's understood then, and now—but what have we here?" he continued, as he caught his foot against some stout rope coiled up on the floor.

"That," said the Professor pompously, "is rope. It is generally kept in readiness for packing purposes—cases, crates, and so on."

"Ah! to be sure," said Mr. Tempest meaningly, and motioned to Goles to pick up the coil. Goles looked inquiringly at the Professor, who frowned and indicated that the behest was to be obeyed, and then, "Now to muster our forces," said Mr. Tempest, as he slowly led the way to the hall-door again.

The Professor despatched Goles to bring all the men he could find available on to the lawn, where some five or six outdoor men and lads

soon appeared, conducted by Goles, in the presence of Mrs. Sapley, whom Mr. Tempest and the Professor had now rejoined. She, good lady, was in a state of mingled delight, self-importance, and flutter, for, as the two came up the gallant gay stockbroker had fallen a pace behind the Professor, and then, looking unutterable things at her, had laid his hand on his heart, and then raised his finger to his lips.

As the little posse of men stood gaping and waiting, Mr. Tempest drew himself up to his full and considerable height. "Now," he said in a tone of smart command, "the thing is to scatter. Every avenue of approach must be watched. Every man his own watchman." He gave a loud cough to cover up this sudden lapse towards frivolity, and resumed more portentously, "You," to a gardener, "in the corner there by the evergreens." "You," to a slim person, "behind that Wellingtonia." "You shall crouch beneath those shrubs." One of much obesity to whom this was addressed looked vastly uncomfortable. "You," this to a specially mild-looking youth, "armed with a stout stick by the side of that path where I think he is most likely to appear. The others will keep

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up a constant patrol in the background and on all-fours. "Dear madam," he said with a winning smile to Mrs. Sapley, and then added, in a great hurry, "Dear sir" to the Professor, "may I beg you both, when we are all in our places, to go indoors until you hear a blast from my whistle. You men must none of you stir from your posts until that signal is given. Now, then," he continued, looking round, "all is arranged save that I must have a post of observation, a coign of vantage; aha! that tree! It seems almost designed for the purpose"—it had, indeed, a kind of ladder of natural footholds leading up to a sort of nest of thick-leaved branches some eight or nine feet above the ground—"and I was always a dab at tree-climbing, so here goes!" He was about to go briskly up into the tree when the Professor, fidgetting, interrupted him with:—

"I am sure, Mr. Hawley, we all have every confidence in your skill, and I wouldn't presume to ask irrelevant questions, but might I inquire—that coil of rope which the gardener has laid on the ground under the next tree by your directions—what now, if I might venture—what is it for?"

"For use," said Mr. Tempest, and went up into the tree.

The Professor and his wife went indoors, she in great trepidation and excitement, he full of hope, which he nervously and volubly expressed, that Hawley, the famed detective, might soon find and use a clue to the mysterious disappearance of the jewels from the handsome mummy which Mrs. Sapley had recently given him as a present.

By the time they had got well indoors Mr. Tempest was beginning to find that his quarters in the tree were a little cramped and uncomfortable. He poked out his head, and heard voices approaching, whereon he poked it in again, arranging, however, a little peep-hole in the branches through which he could see without being seen. He did at once see two figures, male and female, who leisurely approached a garden-seat near the tree and sat down on it. He recognised them as his nephew Archie and Cicely Paston, and found that he could hear with tolerable distinctness all that they said.

"And so you see," Archie Tempest was saying as they sat down, "things do look a little brighter in that way. But I'm afraid you

haven't been paying much attention to what I've said."

"About your new Chief?" asked Cicely demurely.

"Yes—no—yes. About that, of course. But I mean really about everything."

"Everything," said Cicely, "is rather a large order."

"Well, yes. But don't you see I mean the everything I really care about?"

"Oh! yes, I see," replied Cicely, "you regard yourself as the hub of the universe!"

"Now this," said Mr. Tempest to himself in his hiding-place, "is quite interesting;" and then added vaguely: "Ah! youth, youth."

Cicely meanwhile had repented of her mocking speech even before she saw a slightly pained look come into Archie's eyes, and she now added: "You know I didn't really mean that. On the contrary, I should be inclined to think that apart, of course, from soldiering, you are a little lacking in——"

"In what?" cried Archie eagerly.

"Well, in—in self-confidence. Oh!"

The exclamation was due to Archie's drawing nearer to her, and then there was a silence, or

almost a silence, for there was a slight sound which drew from Mr. Tempest a suppressed sigh, compounded doubtless of multifarious emotions.

"Then you do really care?" asked Archie.

"Haven't you proof positive?" rejoined Cicely.

"You know, Cicely," the young man continued, "I never was very good at expressing what I feel and think, but I do think a lot about this if I can't say it."

"We will consider it said," Cicely answered between tears and laughter.

"Let me take the size of your finger," was Archie's next observation.

"Don't be in too great a hurry," said Cicely.

"And don't *you* say 'there's many a slip,' for I won't have it," replied Archie, masterfully.

"Well, I won't," she replied quite meekly.

After another pause :—

"I say," quoth Archie, "I should so like to tell nunky at once. He's been everything to me, after my mother, of course, since my father died. I wonder if your dad will come over with him after dinner."

"And I," said Cicely more seriously, "wonder where Mr. Tempest is."

"Why on earth should you wonder, dear?"

"Well, as it's you, I'll tell you. I'm never very happy when the dad tries his strange drugs on anybody I care much about, and if I hadn't been very fond of Mr. Tempest before, I should have to be now, shouldn't I?"

"You darling!" Archie replied. "But I say, look here, you—you—what's the right phrase? You fill me with apprehension. You don't really think there's anything wrong?"

"No; I don't really think it, but I shall be very pleased when I see Mr. Tempest again none the worse for the famous remedy."

"By George!" said Archie, "it would make me miserable—no, nothing could make me quite *miserable* now—but it would spoil things dreadfully if anything went wrong with him. You don't know what a dear old boy he is!"

"I partly know, and you shall teach me the rest. I wish I had said nothing about it. And now, dear——"

"The first *dear*!" Archie interjected with joy.

"It's time for me to go and see what Mrs. Sapley is doing."

"Come, then," said Archie, and they walked together, loverwise, to the house.

Mr. Tempest, who had had much ado to keep perfectly quiet during their conversation, peeped out as soon as he judged it safe, and looked after them. Then he said to himself reflectively: "This is really most touching. I feel, like the man in *Happy Thoughts*, but with more reason, that a little more would move me to tears. Tears! No! No! That would never do! If I wept I might bring on that confounded malady again, and, if I did, the work of years—I should say of hours—would be wasted; and if that was wasted, upon my word it won't bear thinking of!" He felt in his pocket and produced the fateful flask. "There's a shot—much more than a shot—in the locker yet!" He drank. "That's better. Henry Tempest, you must be a man! More, you must be a detective! More yet, you must out-Hawley Hawley! You don't know what may be in store for you."

Again he little thought as he sank back into his hiding-place how much truth underlay his words.

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CHAPTER VII.

WHEN that "odd lot," the Sapley couple, retired indoors at the bidding of the mock Hawley, the Professor, very literally taking the unknown for the magnificent, considered that everything was being done for the best by the best of detectives, and that he, on whose behalf it was being done, might safely resume the examination of a somewhat puzzling scarab, and so he went back to the seclusion and quiet of his own special den. With Mrs. Sapley it was far otherwise. She, good lady, had much to agitate her, insomuch that after some undecided hovering and wandering about the house, she betook herself to dusting some specially prized china in a china-closet whereof the window, through which she constantly peered, looked on to the carriage-drive. In one of these peerings she discerned two men, at some distance as yet, walking up the drive.

Mrs. Sapley was always curious and inclined to be suspicious, and, if somewhat vague, she was decidedly alert, and, moreover, at this moment had good reason to be on the look-out. She fell then to wondering, first, who these two men were ; secondly, if it would be well to ascertain at once, by some simple stratagem, what their business might be. As they drew nearer she recognised in one of them Sir George Paston, while she perceived that the other was a stranger ; wonderment gave place to decision, and, catching up her garden-hat and a basket with a pair of garden-shears as she passed through the hall, she sauntered delicately out on the drive as though bent on lopping the bushes that bordered it. When she was within distance of the two persons whom she was really stalking, she gave, by no means unskillfully, a mock start of surprise, and greeted Sir George Paston with an only less skilful air of youthful effusiveness.

"Mrs. Sapley," cried Sir George in reply, "the genius of the place, by all that's fortunate!"

"How like Mr. Tempest!" thought the lady to herself, with a blush.

"You will forgive me, I am sure, for coming over early instead of, as I had intended, late in the evening, when you learn the reason for it. And to make the explanation shorter pray let me present to you my friend Mr. Hawl——" The last syllable was not taken out of his mouth, but, on the contrary, kept in it, by a violent nudge from the detective, who thus became introduced to Mrs. Sapley as Mr. Hall. "Who," continued Sir George, taking up the cue and returning the nudge with painful interest, "is so greatly interested in Egyptology, and has so little time at his disposal, that I have ventured to bring him over in this absolutely informal manner. For which I humbly await the pardon of the Châtelaine."

"Oh, Sir George!" said Mrs. Sapley, "no need for that, as, indeed, you might know. I am sure, Mr. Hall, the Professor will be as pleased as I am to welcome you to The Grange, and to show you anything in his collection that may interest you. At this moment, I believe, he is engaged in a microscopic investigation of a scarab."

"Then, madam," broke in "Mr. Hall," with his Sir Harcourt Courtly manner, "let me beg

of you on no account to disturb him. I know enough myself of the difficulties of investigation" (here he nudged Sir George again) "to be most unwilling to interrupt the process. I am—ha—hum——"

"Almost as devoted," said Paston, coming to the rescue, "to flowers as to Egyptian beetles—aren't you, Hall?—so if, Mrs. Sapley, you would condescend to show us your garden treasures until the Professor is at liberty to exhibit his marvels, it would be most kind of you."

"Most kind of you, most kind of you, indeed—most kind of you," was echoed by Hawley, who was not disposed to leave all the talking to Sir George.

Mrs. Sapley, who was genuinely fond and proud of her garden, replied that she would be delighted to comply with the request, and they accordingly took their way to the garden. Sir George explained, as they went, that he had ventured to take the privilege of a friend in leaving his trap at the stables so as to save time to all concerned. Hawley talked vague and big of the delights of a garden, and Mrs. Sapley responded in her most gracious manner. Presently she espied a gardener, and went off,

with an excuse to her two guests, to ask him a question. When she was presumably out of ordinary earshot, "Well, Mr. Hawley?" said Sir George to his companion in his most genial manner, speaking low for extra precaution and using a tone of interrogation.

"Well, Sir George," returned Hawley, swelling himself out and looking amazingly affable, "how to thank you for a readiness in comprehensiveness and apprehensiveness that would do credit to the force itself, though I say it, I really do not know. For what says S'r Alfred to us? 'Quickness and presence of mind,' he says, 'before everything.' And presence of mind we have and quick we are, as I'm sure you'll allow." Sir George bowed assent. "And to find the same in you, sir," Hawley flowed on, "is a pleasure that I shall not readily forget, I can assure you. But I conjecture it's the savage travelling that does it—carrying your life in your hand, as one may say. A man must be sharp on the look-out, Sir George?"

Sir George admitted that a man must have his wits about him.

"So," Hawley continued, "when I ventured on the liberty of nudging you——"

"Not at all," Sir George interrupted.

"You tumbled at once to what I meant, which was——"

"Not to give you away, I imagined," said Sir George.

"Right you are, Sir George. Not as yet, at any rate, for I may learn a deal more unbeknown than if I was to announce myself. For what does S'r Alfred say? 'Pick up all you can,' he says, 'and drop as little as you can.' And there you have it, a deal of meaning in a few words; what I call a regular nutshell."

"Excellently put, indeed," said Sir George, "and very creditable to Sir Alfred, though I may perhaps suspect that Mr. Hawley's intellect and experience have something to do with comprising so much instruction in so few words."

Mr. Hawley looked flattered, wise and mysterious. Sir George eyeing him, said to himself, following unconsciously in Mr. Tempest's footsteps, "What an ass he is!" and said aloud, "At any rate, it shall serve as my chief maxim." He bowed slightly to Hawley, who looked, if possible, more important than before, and then

laid his finger on his lips and cast a quick glance towards the now rapidly returning figure of Mrs. Sapley. Now, it so happened that Mrs. Sapley, while engaged on the quest of the gardener, had, like one of her sex of undying fame, looked back, and had noted that Paston and Hawley had their heads together in close confabulation. This, as her perceptions were already on the alert, set her thinking, not perhaps deeply, but with some swiftness, and the result of her thinking was that she arrived—and here, again, we see the long arm of coincidence—at pretty much the same notion which was contained in Hawley's maxim. Only, as she was a woman, the actions which followed on thought were left partly to the guidance of instinct, a quality sometimes far above reason. Thus, when she and her two guests resumed their walk towards a clock flower-bed which she herself had designed, and when the alleged Mr. Hall, with too obvious carelessness, said something about the frequency of visitors in such glorious weather, Mrs. Sapley, instead of gliding away from the subject, replied rather gushingly :—

“ Oh, yes, indeed, of course, we expect more

visitors of, I may say, all kinds at such a time as this. And, do you know, we had one of a very unusual kind just now. What do you think he was, Mr. Hall? Sir George, I am sure you will never guess! Well then, not to keep you on tenter-hooks, it was neither more nor less than a detective."

"A *what?*" exclaimed Mark Hawley, with so strange a divergence from that constant presence of mind on which he had insisted that it was now again the turn of Sir George, nothing loth, to nudge him painfully.

Mrs. Sapley, on her side, said to herself, "Ah! then it is, or at least it most likely is," and to the others, with a smile of gratification, "I thought you might be a little surprised. Yes, oh! most interesting! The Professor—he came down on some business of the Professor's—has given strict orders against his being disturbed, and so I entertained the detective for a while by myself. He said presently that he would like to look round the grounds quietly, yes, no doubt for some reason of his own."

Sir George, perceiving that Hawley was nigh to bursting with impatience and indignation, gave him another violent nudge, pulled

out his watch, and looking at it, thus addressed Mrs. Sapley :—

“It may at first sight seem both ungracious and unnecessary, dear Mrs. Sapley, that I should look at my watch on the very way to your flower-clock, but the fact is that my friend’s time is short, and yours, I know, is most valuable.”

Mrs. Sapley smiled a gratified acknowledgment, and took up Sir George’s parable. “Always thoughtful for others, Sir George,” she said; “well then, if you gentlemen will excuse me, I will go and find out—cautiously, of course, for that is most necessary” (this she said to gain time)—“if the Professor has completed his investigations. You cannot now miss the way to the flower-clock, and there you will find one of the gardeners to give you all information. By the way, if you *should* see the detective—he went off in the direction of those woods [Oh! Mrs. Sapley] that you see in what painters call—don’t they, Sir George?—the middle distance—would you mind telling him that dinner, though I don’t know if he will stay to dinner, is at a quarter-past eight—for half-past, yes?”

"With the greatest pleasure, madam," cried Hawley, unable longer to keep silence; "but how shall we know this—ha!—detective if we do meet him?"

"Oh!" replied Mrs. Sapley, feeling more than ever sure that she had hit a trail, and remembering vaguely a maxim that truth is sometimes the finest diplomacy, "I saw him for so short a time, and I didn't take such very special notice of him; but, well, he was rather tall, and rather smart, and he had a moustache rather like yours, Sir George, and he had—I did notice that—a grey tie with a grey pearl pin! And so *au revoir*! I am sure if you don't meet the Professor on your way back you will find him ready to welcome you in the house by the time of your return." So saying, she tripped off, still smiling, in the direction of the house, but was soon lost to view in a walk winding through the shrubberies.

No sooner had this happened than Hawley, with all the impetus of soda-water released, turned almost on Sir George, crying, "What did I tell you? The scoundrel. In my new get-up! We must get on his track, and if I don't make him pay for it——" Then, seeing

Paston's eyebrows slightly raised, he continued more quietly: "I do really beg your pardon, Sir George, but it is enough to make any man, even a detective of *my* experience, forget himself for a moment!"

Sir George applied his usual polite formula as a soothing remedy for the other's perturbation, explained that he had understood from Hawley's excusably jerky remarks that their present object had better be to discover at once who or what this supposed detective might be, "or," he added, "this real and unexpected detective; for I cannot help thinking, my dear sir, that the great and famous width of your purview will refuse to reject any possibility, however remote it may seem."

"Sir George," answered Hawley, more than mollified by the compliment, "right you are, and wrong I was. We can't tell for certain who or what the chap may be till we get sight and speech of him. But, to tell you the truth, that grey tie and pearl pin do stick in my gizzard. If it's a coincidence—and I don't say it is, and I don't say it isn't, for we must never judge hastily" (this was said with an air of original wisdom)—"why, then a coincidence it

is with a vengeance, and I can't say fairer than that. And you yourself must see, Sir George, that long odds it is that it's some fellow who's got hold of my kit. But, as you say, it's no use talking yet, and we'd better get along and see if we can't catch up with him. Why, what a pretty little lake this is down here in the hollow ; might come in useful, too. Is it deep, do you know, Sir George?"

"Middling, I believe," said the other ; "but why do you say it might be useful?"

"Well, things like that do come in handy sometimes ; not so often maybe in real life as when you're dealing with Sherlock Holmes and cattle of that kind. Still, it would be a good place to chuck something into that you wanted to get rid of—wouldn't it, now?"

Thus beguiling the way with wise saws and modern instances, to the intense contentment of Sir George, Hawley continued walking warily but briskly with his companion towards the woods indicated by Mrs. Sapley.

That astute and Quixotic lady had meanwhile executed a manœuvre of some cunning. When she considered rightly that it was safe to do so, she doubled on her tracks and made her way,

taking advantage of various kinds of cover, from which she kept an eye now and again on the retreating forms of Paston and his associate, to the tree where Henry Tempest was awaiting, cheerfully enough now, whatever turn the wheel of Fortune next might bring. Arrived underneath the stockbroker's nest, Mrs. Sapley attempted, greatly daring, to whistle under her breath a bar of "Whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad". The peculiar grunting sibilation which she produced attracted Mr. Tempest's attention. He looked out, saw her and beamed. "It is she, then," he cried, "and we are again in the realms of dazzling delight!" He paused, and added very gravely, "for the moment—Prudence compels me to add *for the moment*."

"Oh!" Mrs. Sapley made answer, "such far-seeing wisdom allied with such gallant chivalry! Indeed, there is but too much reason in what you say. We must consider, and that right quickly. We may even have to plot!"

"Plot!" responded the other. "And with such a fair accomplice! Who wouldn't? And a garden plot, too! Where's Cato Street now? A fig for it! Come to my—counsels!" he substituted just in time for another word.

"Mr. Tempest, we must be calm," said the lady, divided between gratification and a feeling that prompt action was necessary, "Sir George Paston is here with a mysterious stranger who calls himself Mr. Hall."

"Hall!" exclaimed the stockbroker, jumping by an odd freak to a right conclusion; "then, depend on it, he's that wig-block Hawley! Hawley, my dear madam," he continued, suddenly dropping into a sententious pedantry, "is not far from being the comparative or superlative of Hall."

"Yes," Mrs. Sapley hurried on, "that is just what I have secretly suspected, and, as you think the same——"

"It must be he!" the other broke in. "Great wits to madness—I mean, great wits jump. When did you see them last?"

"About a minute ago. They were standing and talking by the little lake."

"The little lake! Where?"

"In the hollow, just down here to the left. If you stretch up your head—carefully, I beg—you can see it."

"Ah! I see! Is it deep?"

"Moderately; why?"

"We detectives, that is, we who deal with detectives, must observe everything. One never knows. Hush!"

"What is it?" asked Mrs. Sapley in an agonised whisper.

"I discern Paston and the intruder. They are walking slowly towards some woods. They stop, they are turning back. We must decide on a plan at once."

"At once," echoed Mrs. Sapley; "what shall we do?"

"I, it is obvious," he replied, "must wait and watch here. You, on the other hand, grievous as it is to me, must certainly not be seen here. No; go you in and—let me see, yes—remain concealed until you hear my whistle. Then come out and see what happens."

And, as Mrs. Sapley tripped blushing off to the house, Mr. Tempest drew in his head again, saying to himself with a chuckle, "See what happens! By-the-by, that's just what I told Pettigood to do! I wonder what did happen!"

Sir George Paston and Hawley had stopped and turned, because the detective, after a moment or two of silent reflection, had said: "Sir

George, I'm not quite happy about the information we received from Mrs. Sapley. Suppose it was a blind?"

"A blind, my dear sir—Mrs. Sapley?"

"Sir George," said Mr. Hawley weightily, "in these matters I am, as the poet says, nothing if not practical. It's only a remote suspicion, as it were, and I may be wrong; but then, again, I may be right." Mr. Hawley added, confidentially to himself, "And, for all I know, *you* may be in it."

Sir George, on his side, by this time had begun to be filled with suspicions, not, indeed, of Mr. Hawley, but with regard to the strange alleged detective. He thought it best to keep these entirely to himself, to keep his eyes open, and to humour Hawley. Wherefore he replied, "Of course, it is most likely you are right. What do you recommend, or, let me rather say, what do you direct—for, of course, we are at your orders—as the next proceeding?"

"It is most important," answered Hawley, "that I should observe and be myself unobserved. I have a strange presentiment—mind you, I don't altogether hold with them, but I don't like to neglect them either—that some-

thing remarkable will happen in or close to that little lake. That is where I should like to station myself."

"Ah!" said Sir George, "no doubt very wise. But there appears to me to be no natural hiding-place."

"That," said Hawley, "is the one difficulty."

Paston, who perceived that Hawley was obstinately set upon this new scheme, continued to humour him, and proposed that they should go into the house and see if they could devise some artificial "cover". This was done, and the first and only person they met was Archie coming out of the billiard-room, where he had been knocking the balls about and thinking over his great good fortune. To him Paston rapidly exclaimed the situation, contriving to make him understand that Hawley was to be humoured.

"Ha!" said Archie. "It's not so easy. There is an old watchman's box, but that would be too conspicuous. Let me see. I have it. The new mummy-case!"

The others stared, as well they might.

"It's all right, I assure you," said Archie—"as right as rain. It won't show much in the

dip, and if it does it'll pass for a new fad of the Professor's. *He* won't like it, but that can't be helped. We've only got to take the old gentleman—Rameses, or whatever his name is—out, and then, if Mr. Hawley doesn't mind the inconvenience——”

“Of course not,” broke in Hawley. “Sir, the suggestion does you infinite credit. Some holes to look through and breathe through. The lid shut, but not fastened tight.”

“The plan is admirable,” said Sir George with much diversion under the gravest air. “To work at once.”

The mummy-case was emptied, carried out by the three conspirators, and laid down close by the edge of the lake; Hawley got into the case. The other two put on the lid and went back to the house. Their proceedings, from the moment when they came out of the house bearing the mummy-case, had been closely and anxiously watched by Mr. Tempest from his tree. He had at once recognised Hawley, and as soon as the detective got into the case, swiftly formed a plan. He descended cautiously from the tree, and blew a very low blast on his whistle. It was loud enough to bring

the men whom he had posted from their hiding-places. As they appeared he impressively enjoined silence by easily understood pantomime. He was just about to give them whispered directions when Professor Sapley, who had been leaning out of his window, and who had barely caught the sound of the whistle, joined the little crowd expectantly. A man less ready of resources than Mr. Tempest at that moment was might have been put out. Instead of which he immediately adapted his plan to this occurrence. He beckoned the newcomer mysteriously to draw close to him, and said, in a melodramatic whisper, to the Professor and his myrmidons: "I have discovered all. Not a word for your lives. Not a moment is to be lost. In that long box—crane your heads and you can see it——"

"My mum——" began the Professor.

"Hush!" said Mr. Tempest, "it contains an infernal machine timed to go off in six minutes. Stalk it cautiously and drown it in there. I have said. Take the signal from me, this whistle."

Again lifting his hand to enjoin caution and silence, he nipped nimbly back into his

tree, whence, still with fearsome mystery, he motioned them towards their quarry, which they approached in inconceivably absurd attitudes of caution, and in almost absolute silence. Hawley could not see them because all the hastily made holes were on the other side of the mummy-case. When they were quite close Mr. Tempest, with a reminiscence of Cambridge days, counted to himself, "Five—four—three—two—one—" then he blew a monstrous blast on his whistle. The mummy-case was immediately lifted and flung with a great splash into the lake, and at the same moment, Mr. Tempest slipped quietly down the tree into the arms of one who was watching and waiting for him below.

CHAPTER VIII.

Now, the person who received the descending form of the much-enduring and much-contriving Henry Tempest was, fortunately for him, none other than the faithful Pettigood—Pettigood, the man of Destiny, who, by much exertion of intelligence and industry, and urged on, as he felt, by the finger of Fate, had tracked his beloved master to the foot of the tree wherein the stockbroker had taken refuge.

“Oh, Mr. Tempest! Dear sir! I find you at last!” cried Pettigood; and, “Pettigood! Thank goodness it’s you! How did you get here? How did you get here?” cried the stockbroker almost in a breath.

“On a bicycle, sir, from Three-Mile Hollow,” replied Pettigood.

“What!” said the other, “you, Pettigood, on a bicycle! Ha! ha! but no matter! As you came on it, so must I go away on it.”

"But, sir, can you ride it?"

"You little know what I can do when necessity is the mother of mischief. Don't interrupt. No time is to be lost. I must away at once. Put on this frock-coat, quick. Give me your coat and overcoat. Change hats for the second time to-day. Where's your machine? Here, good. Help me on to it." This was accomplished not without difficulty. "And now observe that you must above all things keep them at bay as long as you can. Farewell! And if for ever, still for ever, fare thee well!"

With these hasty and not very illuminating words, Mr. Tempest mounted Pettigood's hired bicycle (he had ridden a bicycle before, but not for some time past), and took a corkscrew but swift course down the path leading to the high road by which Pettigood had come. The stockbroker, in his deeds and talk, had displayed the swiftness of a prince of "quick change" and patter, and had withal been so masterful that Pettigood was debarred from even thinking of any remonstrance, and much more from uttering any. As he watched his master disappearing in a zigzag fashion, he regained the faculty of thought, and felt that once again he must rise

to a somewhat bewildering situation. He had no certainty as to what Mr. Tempest had been doing, and no means even of guessing whither he was going. But he had been left with definite instructions to "keep them at bay," and to obeying these instructions, ignorant though he was of who *they* might be precisely, he bent every nerve. "That," he said to himself, "is my one plain duty. I must do it. England and Mr. Tempest expect it. And whoever may be the other part of the company described by the short title of *they*, it's pretty certain that those Sapley people must be in it, and if I can pay them out, so much the better." Wherefore he assumed an attitude as like that of Mr. Tempest as he could, for that surely was, he argued to himself, a proceeding indicated by the stockbroker's whirling words, and composed himself to wait for what might happen next.

While he is waiting, let us tell as briefly as may be what actually had happened to Mark Hawley, the detective, whom we left in the inside of a mummy-case, in the inside of a lake into which he had been forcibly thrown by the orders of Mr. Tempest, who certainly added injury to insult by giving these orders in the

character of his very victim. Hawley's was at best a parlous case, but might have been infinitely worse had not the shrill whistle given by the stockbroker led to those inside the house rushing as hard as they could out of the house and arriving on the scene just in time to see the mummy-case touch the surface of the water.

"Pull it out at once," cried Sir George Paston, who, with Archie Tempest, headed a small crowd; "there's a man in it!"

"A man in it!" exclaimed Professor Sapley, helplessly agape. "What! in an infernal machine?"

"An infernal pack of idiots!" interjected Archie, who had quickly descried, and as quickly caught up and worked into a line with a noose, the rope lying on the lawn.

"Now, my lads, stand by to heave with a will the moment the noose catches."

As the words left his mouth, the mummy-case which had been but a moment in the water, bobbed up again, to be promptly caught in Archie's ingeniously improvised lasso.

"Now, steady, all together," he cried, as willing hands caught and pulled on the rope. "Here she comes! That's it! Out with her!"

And now out with him! Capital!" and amid what an unlucky orator once called "a perfect ovation of confused voices and noises," the mummy-case was quickly dragged out of the lake on to dry land. To slip off the lid was the work of a few moments and of many hands, and from the box emerged, very unlike Pandora, Mark Hawley, naturally dripping, and also naturally furious.

"Who the——" he had spluttered so far in rage, when a babel of denials cut short his unprofessional exclamation. Sir George Paston came to the rescue.

"A most unfortunate," he said, "yes, yes, my dear friend" (Hawley brightened a little), "I know, it's small consolation that it was an accident, but the fact is that we now must know what steps to take. And who but you can and will tell us?"

"Sir George," said Hawley, bowing through a miniature cascade, "the experience of a traveller, always on the spot, if I may use the expression. But it is really necessary that I should know who is the author" (here rage began to regain the mastery) "of this diabolical outrage!"

At this inopportune moment Professor Sapley, who had become owlish with bewilderment, and was unhappily inspired to assert himself, said shrilly :—

“I naturally thought, as the detective gave the order——”

To say that at these words Hawley became frantic would be to understate the case. Paston and Archie, one on each side of him, ready to hold him if need be, did their best to soothe him down, but such disjointed utterances as “detective—I’ll detective him—meddling old dolt—not a grain of sense in a turnip field—no more brains than his own mummies,” with others, even more open to objection, inevitably made themselves heard before Paston, with a look of commendation at Archie for preserving his gravity, found it possible to keep Hawley quiet while he said to the Professor :—

“You see, Professor Sapley, the detective for whom you sent, none other than the justly famed Mark Hawley, stands before you, the victim of a most deplorable blunder.”

“Crime, Sir George—crime!” broke in Hawley.

“Quite so,” continued Sir George, “and the

question I would, with Mr. Hawley's kind permission, ask, is, who gave the orders for the mummy-case being immersed?"

"The man," said the Professor feebly—"the man up in the tree!"

"What tree?" cried Hawley. "Lead us to it at once!"

Having said this he immediately took command of the party who were led by Professor Sapley, now meekly obedient, to what had so lately been Mr. Tempest's hiding-place.

Mrs. Sapley and Cicely, who had come out of the house with the rest of the gallery, had for different reasons kept silence hitherto, save for the few exclamations exchanged between themselves. Mrs. Sapley, for her own reasons, kept her own counsel at this juncture. Archie, however, ranged up to Cicely as they went towards the tree, and they were just beginning to talk when Sir George joined them. His keen eye even in the agitation of the moment noted symptoms which led to his saying: "Why, children, I rather fancy you've something to say to me. That's all right. But just now I have something to say to you. What do you think

about this man up in the tree, as the Professor calls him?"

"Oh, papa! do you mean," cried Cicely; and, "Why, sir, do you think," said Archie, partly catching the idea—to which "I really do fear," answered Sir George. "But steady! Here we are, and that figure does look rather like—well, Archie, like what your prophetic soul may tell you. Stop! Hawley (*what* a man, by the way) is just on him. We mustn't interfere now. We must arrange and do the best we can. We understand each other, and that's something."

Hawley, who had been quick to perceive the figure, and had stalked it with some pomposity, now laid a hand (*firm, but quiet*, he said to himself) on its shoulder. The figure gave a slight start, but remained otherwise immovable, with its back turned to those advancing. "Now," said Hawley, with all his fury concentrated into irony, "now, Mr. Detective!"

"What," said an unsteady voice from the figure's averted face, "what is this disturbance?"

"That," said Hawley, turning the figure swiftly round, "that you'll soon see. Hallo! I know that face!"

"And so do I," cried Sir George, as quickly as he could, motioning his daughter and Archie to silence. Then he clapped Hawley on the back, winking violently the while at the figure. "Hawley, my dear fellow," he went on, "it is, as your brilliant powers of observation have told you, Mr. Pettigood, Mr. Tempest's confidential clerk. Doubtless he came here with a message."

"One moment, Sir George," said Hawley. "Of course, as you say, I recognised the man at once; for I saw him, though only for a moment, this morning, and I might tell you, Sir George, that many's the man—ha!" he suddenly pulled himself back to the business of the moment and continued: "But, Sir George, no leading questions *if* you please. Now, my man, were you up in that tree just now?"

"No, sir," answered Pettigood, with a kind of indignant humility which was but partly assumed, "I never was up a tree in my life!"

"Then," said Hawley, "you gave no orders."

"No, sir," answered Pettigood, at whom Sir George continued to wink; "on the contrary, I came with orders."

"And wishes he had not been admitted," whispered Archie to Cicely.

"What orders?" demanded Hawley. "No! Stop! That can wait—what happened when you arrived?"

"Why, sir," said Pettigood, inspired by Sir George's signals and speaking with the rapidity and certainty of one trained to answer inquiries, "a man fell on me out of the tree. Before I could speak he knocked off my hat, gave me his, took my coat, gave me his, took my bicycle, gave me threatening instructions to keep people off, took that path, and disappeared down it before you could say anything was at par!"

"My man," said Hawley, now entirely the alert and determined detective to his own liking, "you are evidently speaking the truth" (and this, so far as it went, was indeed the case); "this shall not be forgotten. Only one thing now, though. Instant pursuit! But—but how?"

"Why!" shrieked the Professor, who had gradually recovered from his semi-stupor and was now burning with desire for activity and distinction, "my new motor-car! Come to the house at once! A rub down, a hot drink, dry clothes——"

"All done in a jiffy," interrupted Sir George.
"With your leave, Professor, I'll go and hurry
up the driver. Archie, Cicely, come with me!
We'll meet you at the front door in no time,
Hawley! To the house, man—to the house!"

CHAPTER IX.

It will have been evident to the meanest capacity (but this, as none of our readers possess *that*, is a superfluous remark) that when Sir George Paston loudly announced his intention of hurrying up the driver of Professor Sapley's new motor-car, the excellent Baronet was putting speech to a use of it well known to him in his travels—that, namely, of concealing thought. He made, indeed, a great show of hurrying himself and his two companions towards the large hut which the Professor called a garage, but as soon as they had turned a corner he slackened speed to near nothingness, saying deliberately, "Easy does it".

Cicely stopped dead without any comment, as if in response to a powerful brake suddenly applied; Archie, however, whose perceptions were less naturally quick, and who, perhaps, had hardly yet had time to get fully abreast of

the situation, did indeed stop, and with the more reason because Sir George laid a gently detaining hand on his arm, but he said, with a surprised and almost aggrieved intonation, "Why, I thought, sir, you were in a hurry".

"Because I said so?" replied Sir George. "Oh, ingenuous youth!" and Cicely in dulcet accents added, "Who do you suppose, then, Archie, is the supposed culprit that we are supposed to be so anxious to catch?"

"Sounds," said Archie in a bewildered way, "like a catch, or a riddle, or an acrostic, or some of those games. But I don't seem to find the answer right off."

"What," said Sir George, "if I prompt you with the one word *uncle*? I thought you had jumped to the idea when I mentioned it just now."

"Oh! Ah! to be sure," Archie made answer; "but the truth of the matter is that I'm in a bit of a muddle still. I hope you'll make excuses for me, Sir George."

"Certainly; and here," said Paston, patting Cicely on the shoulder, "is the very best one you can have. But do keep this in mind now. It is morally certain, so far as I can see, that

the mysterious malefactor on whose trail we are ostensibly so intent is none other than your respected uncle. While I, myself——” Sir George hemmed.

“Started him off,” broke in Archie, now fully awake to what was in progress, “with that inf—— that influential stuff you gave him to cure his hay fever.”

“Very neatly put,” said Sir George, with the faintest suspicion of dryness; “and so without more ado it is clear that we had better not be too quick to supply Mr. Mark Hawley with the means of following up his desired prey.”

“No, indeed,” said Cicely; “but look you here, best of dads. You two can be trusted to cause all possible delay with all possible appearance of haste. For my own poor part I think I had better go back to the house and make company for poor Mrs. Sapley. To tell you the truth, dad, I have ideas of my own which I would rather keep to myself for the present. But I think it may help us to follow them out. I must go back and condole with Mrs. Sapley.”

“Very well,” said Sir George. “Come along, Archie; I want you.”

And so, with no undue haste, Cicely returned to the house, while, with very undue leisure, Sir George and Archie went on their way to stir up the autocrat of the autocar.

Cicely, on returning to the house, found that the Professor had again retired to his den, there to soothe his ruffled feelings by contemplation of his treasures; that Hawley, whose inner man had been comforted with hot potions, was now, with the help of the Professor's wardrobe and valet, doing the best that could be done for his outer man; and that Mrs. Sapley was "by her lone" in the little drawing-room. Thither, accordingly, Cicely betook herself. The discerning reader has, it is to be hoped, discovered that she was no fool, and that she had good reasons for confessing to having ideas of her own as to the loss of the mummy jewels which had caused so much consternation. And perhaps she believed in these ideas all the more because they were due to the so-called instinct which is an essential quality of the Eternal Feminine.

She found Mrs. Sapley sitting by the window and staring disconsolately out of it, and she opened the conversation by saying:—

"Dear Mrs. Sapley, I am so glad to find you getting a little rest after all these agitations."

"Agitations!" cried Mrs. Sapley, starting into nervous excitability. "You may well say so, and perhaps you'd be yet more inclined to say so if you knew all!"

"Perhaps," answered Cicely with soft wisdom, "I do know, or nearly know, more than you suppose. But," she continued, seeing a look of distressed alarm on her companion's face, "never mind that. I daresay it's only a fancy of mine. What you must have gone through! Do you know, it may be very wicked, but I must confess that, as it didn't do him any real harm, I couldn't help laughing at Mr. Hawley being thrown into the lake." She saw the ghost of a smile in Mrs. Sapley's face and continued: "And in the new mummy-case, too!"

Mrs. Sapley gave a short, sharp laugh, something like a fortnight-old puppy's bark, and then: "Mummy-case indeed! New mummy-case! What possessed me to think of such a present for the Professor I never can know!" Then the ghost of a smile vanished with spectral swiftness, and Cicely hastened to say: "Dear Mrs. Sapley, you could not, possibly foresee

what complications would come of it. Now, could you?"

"There! Now, didn't I say so, Professor? Oh! my dear, I beg your pardon, but I've got so into the habit of snatching at anything that any one says in my excuse, and pointing it out to him while there's time, and then he can't well contradict that—well, I'm sure you understand, for you're as quick as you can be, and I often wish I was!"

"I can easily understand," answered Cicely gently, "falling into a habit of speech. But is the Professor, then, so very terrible?"

"My dear, if you can prove to the Professor that he's all wrong, you're all right. But if you can't—well, the Professor does like to be in the right. Perhaps it's only natural."

"I see," said Cicely, as indeed she did, for Mrs. Sapley's simple words pictured a whole panorama of alarums and excursions. "And this seems to be all such a complicated business, doesn't it?"

"Indeed, yes, what with one thing and another; and poor dear Mr. Tempest!"

"Mr. Archibald Tempest?" inquired Cicely, with demure face and voice.

"Yes! No! Oh! Dear me, dear me, what am I saying?" cried poor Mrs. Sapley, who, with bewilderment and nervousness, and chiefly relief at being able to talk with some freedom, had indeed been carried beyond herself.

"You see," said Cicely quietly, with no appearance of perceiving the other's agitation, "I did not know—at least, I did not really, really, know—that Mr. Tempest, the stockbroker, was an acquaintance—or shall I say a friend?—of yours."

"Oh, my dear, I've known him in a way for some time past, but never as he deserves till this very morning. And now I feel I really may call him a friend; and then that he should be in such trouble, though why, I can't quite see; but I'm sure it's no fault of his; and oh, dear me!" Mrs. Sapley finished up with a burst of longing for help as well as sympathy. "My dear, I should so like to tell you all about it!"

As this was precisely the end for which the equally ingenious and ingenuous Cicely had been exerting herself, she naturally invited Mrs. Sapley to disburden her mind. And accordingly Mrs. Sapley told her story as plainly and

quietly as she could ; but the more Mrs. Sapley succeeded, for a moment at a time, in expelling her own prolix and divagating nature, the more it came back again, so that a considerable time elapsed before Cicely, illuminating the narrative with her own brisk intelligence, had unmistakably found, what she had before divined, the real clue to the maze. When this had been accomplished, she said :—

“Dear Mrs. Sapley, I think I can promise you that I will straighten all this out if, in return, you will grant me one condition and make me one promise.”

“My dear,” said Mrs. Sapley, looking quite cheerful again, “I will do anything you like to ask me.”

“Very well,” said Cicely, gently but firmly. “For the condition you must let me tell papa exactly how things stand. For the promise you must find an opportunity, as soon as possible, for giving me the—well, well, we’ll say *it*—and I in turn will find an opportunity of handing it over to him.”

“Very well,” said Mrs. Sapley, meekly, though with a slight note of tremor in her voice. The words were followed by a nervous start, due to

"a noise without," and beneath the window, as of an asthmatic giant struggling up the Hill Difficulty. "Oh! my dear," she cried to her new protector, "what is that?"

"I think," answered Cicely, "it must be the Professor's new motor-car, and I fear," she added, with a smile, "that there has been some delay in getting it ready. Shall we go down and see?"

The two descended, Mrs. Sapley leaning both in a bodily and a spiritual sense on Cicely, and found the motor-car—the Sarcophagus, as the Professor had called it—waiting at the front steps and seeming to be afflicted with that "wambling in the innards" felt by Charles Ravenshoe when he first took his place in the 'Varsity Eight. The driver, sitting in his appointed place, smiled mysteriously to himself like one superior to the trials of delay; the Professor fidgeted about with occasional shrill ejaculations; Hawley surveyed the scene with majestic dignity, despite ill-fitting clothes, the while Sir George Paston kept him amused with such small conversation as "All ready for the chase at last! No fault of the driver—why use a French word?—I assure you. The fact is the Pro-

fessor would choose the car himself—might have suited one of the Pharaohs, queer name he gave it—driver, most intelligent fellow, *will* call it Sarcophaygus; you and I know better, hey, my dear Hawley? Most intelligent fellow, though, really—quite safe with him—and he'll get all the pace out of the rattle-trap that can safely be got. Besides, my dear fellow, what *you* don't know about motoring—hey?"

At this moment the Professor engaged Hawley's attention by some futile remark, and Cicely plucked her father by the sleeve. "Dad, dear," she said, "I must have a few words with you alone as soon as this expedition has started."

"Then," said Sir George, "your researches have been successful?"

"Almost as much so as your efforts to hurry up the motor-car. Ah! Mr. Pettigood," she continued, as the confidential clerk joined the group, "you have come to see the start in pursuit of the mysterious burglar."

Pettigood looked at her, and by what he saw in her face was encouraged to say with meaning: "Yes, madam, and my hopes of success are certain, or I may say of a certain kind."

"Ah!" she replied, "and I hope that your

hopes are well founded. Not a word more. They are on the point of getting off."

Hawley, indeed, had got in. The others stood round about at a respectful distance; Sir George said as a parting speech to Hawley: "Off you get, then; if any time has been lost, I am sure this excellent fellow"—as he spoke he actually winked secretly at the driver—"will do his best to make it up. And may you have all the success I wish you!"

He stepped back, the car went whizzing down the drive, and the company returned to the house. Cicely lingered a moment to say to Sir George: "And if your wishes are fulfilled, dearest dad?"

"In that case, my darling," answered Sir George, "I fear that Mr. Mark Hawley may find it to be, as Tony Lumpkin has it, "a damned long dark dirty dangerous way!"

CHAPTER X.

WHEN Mr. Tempest took his departure from the shade of the fateful tree, watched anxiously by Pettigood, the loyal, the alarmed, the bewildered, but through all trials the man of Fate, of resolution, and of devotion, the course of his thoughts was at first, and not unnaturally, as zigzaggy as that of the bicycle which he bestrode with an odd air of deboshed jauntiness. "Who would have thought," he said to himself, "that after such long disuse I should ride a bicycle, and a tall bicycle"—there was an ominous wobble—"surely a very tall bicycle" (it was, in fact, quite the reverse), "with so much ease?" The machine creaked painfully and gave a lurch. "Steady, mare!" cried the stockbroker, with a reminiscence of long-past hunting days, and added, "Upon my word, a very high-mettled steed this! Or shall we say with plenty of metal? No!" he answered the

question himself with considerable sternness, "you shall not say anything so feebly and fatuously jocose! Never shall it be said that Henry Tempest was a punster, and a very poor punster, too!" He hummed over the words to the tune of "A good judge, too," in *Trial by Jury*, and then resumed his soliloquy. "Henry Tempest!" he said reflectively, "what have I to do with Henry Tempest now? I must keep steadily in view the fact that I am a person representing Hawley, the detective, in disguise, and why in disguise is more than I shall ever understand. Now, what have I got to do? To put myself in Hawley's place? What a dreadful thing if I really did, and stayed there! Shall I try to do what Hawley would do in my position? No, for surely that way lies blundering. Let me see, now; the best thing, doubtless, must be to open one's eyes and shut one's mouth—a good thought that, for silence is golden—and see what fortune sends me. Then I will act accordingly. Certainly I am in the mood for action. Very much so. How else could I be indulging in these bright but by no means shallow reflections (and how they do come crowding upon me!) and at the same time

riding a bicycle like a pony so fine, tra la! Ah! Paul Bedford was good in *Blueskin*!"

This set him off on a train of recollections, theatrical and other, of his earliest youth, but most fortunately the capricious and tricky Imp of the Flask kept his outward senses on the alert. Most fortunately, for by this time he was out of the Professor's grounds, and proceeding more and more steadily along a high road which at this part was far from being wide, and was overhung by trees on each side. Presently he was aware of a large cart approaching him. Only for a second he wondered, on discerning it, what it would be better to do, and then, "I might pass it safely," he thought, "and, again, I might not. Discretion is clearly the better part of bicycling. Let's get down." This, aided by his length of leg, he accomplished safely and quickly, stood aside to let the vehicle pass, and returned the good-humoured carter's greeting with sonorous cheerfulness. He watched the retreating carter with a vague sentimental regret, which soon gave way to a renewed desire for action. Clearly the most obvious shape to give to this feeling in the first instance was to mount the bicycle again, but as

to this he felt certain qualms. It still appeared to him of abnormal height, and in a sudden moment of petulance it crossed his mind that Pettigood had been extremely thoughtless, ungrateful, wanting even in a decent semblance of respect, to bring him so Brobdingnagian a machine. But no, he soon reconsidered. Pettigood could not well foresee to what purpose the inscrutable movements of Fate would divert the bicycle. And as for thoughtlessness, no one could really deny that Pettigood had proved himself, in unforeseen circumstances, most thoughtful, most devoted, most capable. No, Pettigood certainly was not to blame; quite the contrary. Who, then, was to blame? His fancy hovered for an instant on Sir George Paston, the giver of the flask, but in another instant flew thence with something like horror. But for George he would still be in the throes of sneezing and weeping, and, moreover, would have missed some of the most diverting and enjoyable hours he had ever spent. To be sure, things were for the moment uncomfortably complicated by his having to personate the remarkable Hawley; and perhaps Hawley was the real object for obloquy. Yet, if Hawley

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ing, and surely amusement was the one object in view. But in spite of a spirited and decided inclination to pursue the road and the adventure, he felt, there was no doubt about it, a curious inertness both of his corporeal and of his mental faculties stealing over him. What, he thought, might not happen if it were to overcome him? At once the image of the flask leapt to his mind, and he pulled it slowly out of his pocket, fearing to find it empty, or nearly empty. "Why," he cried, as it came fully into view, "it's like the conjuror's Inexhaustible Bottle! Ah! I went in for conjuring when I was an undergraduate, and certainly that unforgettable evening when I forced the wrong card, *and* its amazing consequences; but a truce to this—there's no time for recollections now!" He took a sip from the flask and straightened himself up. "Oho!" he said, "I feel better and clearer at once, and as to its being an inexhaustible bottle, that is, of course, but the seeming result of my extraordinary prudence and sagacity in always going under rather than over the mark of the proper dose. Henry Tempest, I believe, when you are put to it, there are few things you cannot accomplish, you and Pettigood between you;

for I really think we must include Pettigood. Now let me see. Should another sip be, as the faculty used to say, exhibited? I rather fancy that its application might exhibit me in a more capable, if not a more amiable, light. But we must do nothing rash. And we must really leave a reserve in the bottle in case of unforeseen emergencies." He held the flask up to the now waning light. "So. That will do capitally." He took another small sip, and replaced the flask in his pocket with brisk energy. Then he looked up the road and chuckled as he thought how illimitable it had seemed to his disturbed fancy of a few minutes before.

He now perceived, not more than fifty yards ahead of him, an unpretending roadside inn with an old-fashioned mounting-step in front of it. "The very thing," he said to himself. "I repeat that we must do nothing rash, and here in good time is the very thing to help me on to my fiery barb again." At the moment a person who was obviously the innkeeper, and with whom it appeared to be the breathing time of day, came out from the house and proceeded to survey the prospect in a leisurely fashion. "Better and better," thought Mr. Tempest.

"I had a kind of a feeling that I had forgotten something, and now I know what it is. What is a detective's business? To detect, of course. And from whom should one detect things if not from mine host of the Barley Mow, or whatever may be the legend on that pleasantly modest sign-board, painted, it may be, by some as yet inglorious artist whose name may some day be a household word?" In this agreeably prophetic mood Mr. Tempest walked with the bicycle up to the door of the little inn, where he was greeted with the utmost civility by the proprietor, who, after a remark or two on the weather and on farmers' prospects, asked if he might have the pleasure of serving his visitor with any refreshment.

"Why," Mr. Tempest made answer, true to his watchword of *nothing rash*, "I am at present taking a course of medicine and must not mix anything with it beyond a modest glass of ginger-beer, on which I think I may venture. But I trust I shall not be offending, Mr. —"

"Farwell, if you please, sir," said the landlord.

"Farwell—ha!—yes—thank-you. I hope I may presume to ask if you will join me in a glass of your own excellent ale."

"Why, thankee, sir, it is good ale, though I say it that shouldn't, and I'll bring both the requirements directly."

So saying he disappeared, and Mr. Tempest occupied the brief time between this and his reappearance with fresh self-gratulation and with the reflection that something—it was idle to speculate what—would surely come of this.

When Farwell came back Mr. Tempest took the proffered glass of ginger-beer, and "I pledge you" he said with dignified cordiality, as he raised the goblet high in air.

"Thankee, sir; the same to you, and many of 'em," replied Farwell, draining his glass and becoming more and more impressed by the suavity and the distinguished appearance of his guest.

"Come from the Grange, sir, if I may make so bold?" he asked when Mr. Tempest had in turn emptied his glass. "Beg pardon, sir, but there's naught else for miles and miles in the direction you came from to attract a gentleman like you."

"I—hum! I have indeed been at the Grange," replied Mr. Tempest, with no coldness but with a certain air of reserve which immedi-

ately excited Farwell's curiosity, so that now the two were mutually anxious to draw each other out.

"You see, sir," said Farwell slowly, and with rustic cunning, "I thought, not having seen you hereabouts like before—not that I can call to mind, leastways, and I'm sure if it had been so it would have stuck in my mind, me being of a natural good memory and you being a gentleman as one would not fail to notice—I thought as how it might"—he paused, hoping that the other might break in with some scrap at least of information; but as nothing of the kind happened, he continued still more slowly with "I thought as how, you see, sir, it might be like that".

He ended with desperate lameness and disappointment; but of this there appeared no vestige on his face, which still wore the deprecating sheepish smile he had artfully assumed at the beginning of his speech, along with a manner and phraseology far more bucolic than was habitual with him. If he hoped that a semblance of silent stupidity would prove a more attractive bait than his words had done, he was doomed to yet more disappointment, since Mr.

Tempest, for all answer, looked at him placidly and said with much gravity, "Yes, you are right; that is how it was," thinking to himself the while, "What a magnificent idiot this fellow is!"

Farwell, on his side, was asking himself, "Now, is he an artful one or is he just one that doesn't want to be bothered? That's what I should like to know." And in these moods they continued gazing at each other, careless benevolence to all appearance meeting the eye of moral and innocent inquiry, until Mr. Tempest broke the silence with "And have you been long in these parts, now?"

"Ay, that I have, sir," said the other, with the bustling air of one glad to be noticed; "man and boy I've been here—let's see—why I'd kept this inn a many years before Professor Sapley came to live at the Grange yonder. Well, sir, the house hadn't been occupied, not to say regularly like, for some time before that. It was mostly a matter of on-and-off tenants. You'll be an old friend of the Professor's maybe, sir?"

"H'm, not very old," said Mr. Tempest quite placidly and quite truly.

"Ah!" said Farwell, who had again hoped to pick up a crumb of knowledge, and again

found himself empty-handed. Then he tried another tack. "The last folk that lived there for any time," he said, allowing a trace of animation to appear in his features, "was a terrible queer couple. Quarrelling all the week, and Sundays too! Cat-and-dog life you might call it; but for that matter."—here he assumed an uninterested and discursive air—"I've got a dog and cat that's as friendly as—well, as anything." And at this he stopped dead and looked vacant. Mr. Tempest permitted himself to unbend a little, and said, "And the last couple that lived there for any time were very quarrelsome, you say?"

"Quarrelsome? Well, there! If dogs delight to bark and bite, that was just mere fleabites to the way those two went on. It was said here and there that they never stayed longer than a year, or maybe a half, in the same place, but were always moving on to see if they could agree better somewhere else. Yes, that's what was said about them, to be sure."

"Ah! Such things unluckily do happen," Mr. Tempest remarked, with a shade of encouragement in his tone and manner.

"They do for sure, sir," said Farwell, "and

if"—his smile broadened—"I were sure of not giving offence like——"

"Oh! no offence, no offence at all. You can't offend *me*," Mr. Tempest genially interrupted.

"Well, sir, it do seem as though things weren't no better now, so far, at least, as matrimonial happiness do go, than they was then. Not but I'm only just repeating what I've heard as common talk, in a manner of speaking."

"Indeed! Do you know that this is very interesting?" said Mr. Tempest in an important voice, but still with a benignant smile. "Possibly," he continued, "you might be able to tell me on which side the blame is supposed to be?"

Farwell scratched his head with an admirably feigned look of puzzlement and apprehension, whereon the other continued:—

"I am not asking, of course, what you yourself think of the matter, but merely what you may have heard as common talk, in a manner of speaking." As he spoke he had pulled a little notebook, as if accidentally and mechanically, from his pocket, and with his concluding words he made as if it had suddenly caught his eye, frowned, and ostentatiously put it back

again. Farwell's timid expression gave way to his former loose-fitting smile, with just a hint of malice added to it.

"Well, sir," he said, "if so be as that's it, and if I weren't to be held what you might call dis-
posable for it——"

"Certainly not," said Mr. Tempest, decidedly, "certainly not."

"Then, sir," said Farwell, "they do say, to be sure, as how Professor Sapley do set his wife a terrible tune with his tantrums of jealousy and such like. And more than that," he added somewhat hastily, "and less than that I couldn't say if—if it was ever so."

He looked at Mr. Tempest as an experienced actor might look at the front of the house for a round of applause.

The stockbroker looked back at him intently, and said slowly and distinctly, "Mr. Farwell, I am much obliged to you—greatly obliged to you. More, to borrow your own phrase, and less I cannot at present say. And now I must be going on." He moved towards the mounting-step, and Farwell, taking the bicycle from the wall where it had leant, prepared to help him on. And here it may be noted that such

was the power of Mr. Tempest's manner that only long afterwards, when telling the tale of this interview was a habit that grew on him, did Farwell notice any discrepancy between the highly finished appearance of the visitor and the extreme shabbiness of the bicycle.

"Beg pardon, sir," he said, when Mr. Tempest was on the point of mounting, "but be you, if I might make so bold, anyways connected with the law?"

"The law," replied Mr. Tempest with much dignity, when he was actually on the bicycle, still supported by Farwell's stalwart arm, "the law, Mr. Farwell, has many and far-reaching connections, and my advice to you is to have as little to do with the law as possible."

"Well, I'm jiggered," said Farwell to himself as the visitor went off with an impressive air which distracted attention from a slight tendency to wobbling.

And "Something certainly will come of this," said Mr. Tempest with much content to himself almost at the same moment.

Something did come of it. Indeed, the effect of the interview and of Farwell's version of it was more extensive perhaps than peculiar in

and around the village for a long time to come. But with that we are not now concerned, and, indeed, in the case of those who have experience of village life the result may be, to use a time-worn phrase, "more easily imagined than described".

Mr. Tempest, still imbued with the child's delight that "the world is so full of a number of things," went on his way, or, as he thought, in a returning gleam of the facetiousness he had erst condemned, "*rode* along thinking of nothing at all," towards the more populous part of the village of Little Stonyford, and the fact that he had not even the most distant hearsay acquaintance with the place caused him not a moment's disquietude. He listened in measureless content to the eventide observations of birds, the lowing of cattle, the voices of distant dogs, and eke the hum, not in itself unpleasing, of the too fertile mosquito. He did, indeed, wonder lazily if it was by an offshoot of Puritanical insular pride that this creature had been tolerated with fatuous contempt under the name of gnat, but even in this reflection there was not a tinge of anything but placidity. And in this dream of amused contemplation he might have

gone quietly on to and through the village entirely careless of what his goal might be, had he not suddenly become aware of a noise which was quite different from the other soothing sounds of the falling day. It was at first somewhat, but not quite, like the humming of a huge swarm of rather indignant bees, but as it grew louder and presumably nearer, there came with it at brief intervals a metallic clanking and cranking with a nasty jar in it. "If," he thought, "this is due to the labours of the village blacksmith, he most assuredly is not a harmonious blacksmith," and as the noise continued his otiose musings gave way to a renewed alertness. He wondered, with a touch of uneasiness, what this might portend, and then there was borne to his awakened ears a blast, distant yet discernible, as of the trumpet of a large particularly ill-bred mosquito.

He started slightly—he was aroused enough to remember that his tenure of the bicycle was not too secure—and said to himself, "A motor-car, an automobile, a devastating fiend as I live, or, rather, as I ride—as I ride! A motor, doubtless, and with men in it! What men? And bent on what? Why, on *me*, for a ducat! I

dare not look over my shoulder : that would be, indeed, a tempting of Fate ! Tempest, my dear friend, there's nothing for it but to put on the pace." And with this he straightway did his level best to commence record-breaker. The immediate result was a gross return of wobbling, which, in his hitherto easy progress from the inn, had grown to be almost a negligible quantity. The more he pedalled, the more eccentric did his onward career become, but determination, valour, and the old sporting instinct of winning a race whatever happened, carried it away, and carried on the bicycle and its rider, in spite of their deviations from a straight course, at a speed which Mr. Tempest certainly had dreamt not of when he first embarked on this phase of his adventures. More and more did he exert himself with unfaltering effort, yet, as could not but happen, the motor, as he well knew from the clearer sounds of the horrible clanking and trumpeting, gained surely upon him.

After a time of anxious but undaunted effort the noise of shouting travelled most unmistakably to him on the breeze. "Aha !" he cried, "doubtless they're shouting to me to stop. Let

'em shout. I won't stop. No, no! Up with the jolly Roger! Tempest and victory! I carry weight, I ride a race, 'tis for a thousand pounds—and upon my word I wish it really was! Game from start to finish is the motto!" And with this nice derangement of similes he raced on undefeated, though the clanking and the shouts were evidently getting within a very measurable distance. On and on he pressed, panting and labouring, until suddenly, just as he began to realise that all might be of no avail, he heard a mighty crash behind him, then what sounded like furious objurgations, and then silence. "Oh!" he said to himself, "had a spill. Well, I can't stop to inquire, and if I could it wouldn't be much good. So, business first, and the motor, luckily, after, and on we goes again." He now relaxed his pace, and, able to think of something besides the late contest of speed and endurance, perceived, a little way ahead of him, a considerable building with a red lamp. "A doctor's?" he thought. "If so, a largish doctor. All the better for the motorists, perhaps. Well, anyhow we'll stop there." As he approached nearer to the building he perceived the words *Police Station* star-

ing at him from the red lamp, and on the spur of the moment, and with considerable enjoyment, devised a plan which he promptly carried into effect. When close to the door he beckoned, rather gingerly, to a policeman who was standing there, and, not for the first time, the potent impressiveness of his demeanour availed him. The man came forward, saluted, and put out a ready arm to steady the bicycle. Mr. Tempest leant towards him and said in a mysterious undertone, "Could I see the superintendent on a matter of pressing business? It may well be that he expects me. I have come straight from—from *there*, you know." He jerked his head mystically. "He shall be told, sir," said the policeman, and to a comrade said, "Tell the superintendent there's a gentleman wants to see him at once, and," he added under his breath, "you might say that from the description I think it's Mr. Hawley from Scotland Yard. Anglo-Indian, you see, just as we were told he might be." The second policeman departed, Mr. Tempest made a few affable and pleasing remarks to the first one, and quickly the urbane superintendent, duly impressed by the message, came out trim, erect and smiling.

"Mr. Hawley?" he said, in a subdued tone of inquiry.

Mr. Tempest nodded.

"I stopped here," he said, "just to tell you that following just behind me a few minutes ago was a motor-car going at an absolutely break-neck speed. Indeed, I was a little nervous lest it should run into me and interfere with all my carefully laid plans. It's broken down now, but I should think they'd be up again soon, and I should think you might do well to stop them. I've got an idea, to tell you the truth, that they're up to no good, but you'll understand that I can't stop to attend to that now. Besides, you know, it's your business, and I'm sure it couldn't be in better hands."

"Very good, Mr. Hawley, it shall be attended to. Going straight on, may I ask?"

"Yes, yes—for the present, at any rate."

"I hope that business at the Grange is coming out all right," said the superintendent.

"Pretty well, pretty well. It's rather a nice little case," said Mr. Tempest.

"I notice you haven't got a lamp, Mr. Hawley, and it's past lighting up time. Shall I lend you one?"

"H'm—yes," said Mr. Tempest, "but don't light it, please. I have matches with me, and, as you know, there *are* occasions when we ourselves have to break those very rules which it is our duty to enforce."

With this access of grandiloquence, and amid the respectful salutations of the little crowd, Mr. Tempest, muttering to himself "Catch me with a lighted lamp, a very lode-star to my enemies," rode on his way, and there for the present we leave him.

CHAPTER XI.

WE have not permitted ourselves to dwell in detail on what things befell Mark Hawley in the time between his entry into the Grange dripping wet and his emerging from the house dry outside but not inside. It may now be stated that when he came out from the house to take his place in the snorting motor-car, recognition of him as "Mr. Hawley, *the* detective," might have been something difficult. Had he lent himself to the extravagances of purely fictitious detection, then, indeed, his somewhat eccentric appearance might have passed for a disguise. To be brief, his still heated brow was surmounted by a cap of ancient pattern, known as a "deerstalker". This had been the Professor's contribution to the general rehabilitation of Hawley, who had seized upon it as at once becoming by its shape and symbolic in its appellation. For his coat, a sober morning garment,

provided from the butler's wardrobe, not much could be said. Admirable though it was in texture, it was plain that the garment had been cut in strict accordance with a limited supply of cloth. Mr. Hawley's hands and wrists protruded from the sleeves like those of an overgrown schoolboy, and when he bent in obeisance to the ladies there was an ominous sound of rending, which made Archie and Sir George bundle him hastily into the motor before the astonished party could fully take in or appreciate the oddity of trousers, rather short and narrow, clinging desperately to limbs in no way dwarfish.

"I hope," said the Professor, "that the curriculum—if one may so describe the antithesis of a Roman chariot—will carry you safely and swiftly, Mr. Hawley."

"If I were not," said the rather flustered detective, "so bothered with these trousers."

"Take care of the coat," advised Archie, "and the trousers will take care of themselves."

"Ah, well, off we go. Needs must when the devil drives," said Hawley, and with these, and with some words already recorded from Sir George Paston, the detective was swept down

the drive in a puffing and jolting car, in the conduct of which the great man before very long had some reason to suspect the very personage to whom he had lightly referred of being concerned.

"I hope there's nothing wrong," said the Professor, going back into the house, "but I never heard the car make such curious noises before."

Almost at the same moment, the unlucky Hawley, having recovered from the sudden jerk which almost threw him out of the tonneau as they rounded the near gate-post of the drive, was expressing to the chauffeur an almost identical hope.

"We shall do all right," answered this man at the wheel, who affected for the occasion a grim and anxious taciturnity, which, like the behaviour of the car, may or may not have had some connection with a recent conversation between Peter Gurney—so was the driver called—and Sir George Paston.

"You are sure there is no danger of a breakdown, my good fellow?"

"Not as long as she fires all right."

"Fires! Who fires?" asked Hawley anxi-

ously. "This is quite new and of the utmost importance. Who fires?"

"The car," said Peter; and if he did not add "you fool," the omission was not for want of temptation.

Hawley had no time to be conscious of timidity or the reverse, with his whole mind centred on the chase, and every nerve strung in the hope of overtaking what he called, in conversation with Peter, "the miscreant"—a word which, rolled round his tongue, he found almost as blessed as Mesopotamia itself. In spite of his preoccupation, however, it did seem to him that motoring was a strangely overrated diversion. Travelling, as it seemed to his inexperienced mind that they were doing, at fifty miles an hour, was startling if stimulating. The car rattled along the flat with that fearsome clanking and clamour which suggests the presence of numberless nuts and bolts and screws that *may* go to pieces and wreck the whole caboodle. She jolted and whizzed and screeched down the hills, and she hurled herself up them, assisted by Peter at the hand-pump—Peter the silent, whom Mr. Hawley frantically clutched at the first time of his using it, under a clear impres-

sion that the only being who knew the workings of the beast was trying to throw himself overboard.

When this little episode was over the journey went rather more quietly. From muttered exclamations by Peter, Mr. Hawley began to judge that there was something wrong with the mysterious process of "firing". Certainly there was a loss of speed; and it was at this moment that the detective's eyes, anxiously piercing the gloom, caught sight of a something dancing oddly and erratically over the road ahead of them.

"Is that a bicyclist?" asked Mr. Hawley, in what, intended by him for a cautious whisper, was turned by a sudden jolt into a scarce articulate grunt.

Peter brought the car to a standstill, looked carefully ahead, and opined that it was a light cart.

"Ass!" said Mr. Hawley; "it is a bicyclist —*the* bicyclist, the miscreant"; and, having once more emitted this enticing word, he leaned back, saying: "On, Peter, on! Make her spin."

With a bang and a crash and a rattle and a

dash off they went again, Mr. Hawley clinging on by one eyelid and keeping the other eye busily on the look-out. But the fury of their progress was short-lived. After leaping along for some three hundred yards at such a pace that the revolution of the motor almost kept pace with the frantic beats of the detective's heart, they had got very near the figure ahead of them. There was no mistaking the creature. A bicyclist it was, and a very eccentric bicyclist to boot, wobbling at times from side to side of the road in a fashion which seemed to betoken great inexperience, or great exhaustion, or both, and anon making quite unexpectedly a steady, swift, straight run for some way with such precision that a spectator might have wondered if the previous zigzags were not an optical illusion. The joy of battle lit Mr. Hawley's eyes, which threw ahead ferocious glances that almost obviated the necessity for the motor's large acetylene lamps, lighted, to save trouble, before they started.

"I have him now," he muttered, "in the hollow of my hand. He cannot escape me;" and Mr. Hawley's hand, still protruding in that eccentric way from the inadequate sleeve of the

butler's morning coat, closed and unclosed with fevered excitement. At the very moment, however, when the doom of the "miscreant" seemed irrevocably sealed, a sudden lurch almost threw the car into the ditch, and the detective into the hedge, and car and chase came to an abrupt standstill.

Mr. Hawley, to borrow a phrase from old-time novels, muttered a fearful execration when he found himself condemned to watch his quarry painfully but successfully ascend the hill they were beginning to breast, and slowly turn the corner at the top.

"And what, sir," he continued, turning to Peter, who seemed to be sorely troubled with a sudden fit of coughing, "is the meaning of this?"

"I always warned the Professor," said Peter very deliberately, "against this here new cylinder," with which cryptic statement he descended from his seat and crawled underneath the body of the car with an ease and alacrity that were quite evidently the result of long practice. While he scraped and scratched and screwed and oiled and grunted, coming out every now and then to snatch a fresh tool from

the bag and disappear once more, Mr. Hawley sat fuming and fussing in the car. "Monstrous—outrageous—unforgiveable," were ejaculations let drop by him on each occasion of Peter's re-appearance. At last the latter, turning viciously on his passenger, said :—

"Suppose you try what you can do? I can't make out"—this was literally true—"that there's anything much the matter with her."

To Peter's surprise, not to say alarm, Mr. Hawley, taking the desperate resolve of a hunter demented by the escape of the hunted, replied, with a terrible calm :—

"Very well. Give me the reins—I mean the buttons—I mean the handles."

Then, before Peter had time to comply with this confused request or to utter a word of warning, the great detective addressed himself to the task of discovering which wheel to turn, or knob to pull or press to make the confounded affair start. As no success met his first efforts, he applied the counsel which he distinctly remembered having read somewhere—as a matter of fact, in a comic paper, though this he unluckily did not remember in time—to "pull everything you see and put your foot on every-

thing else". The result was appalling. Before he knew where he was, the car seemed to be convulsed, then gave a monstrous grunt, and then flew, so to speak, from under Mr. Hawley's hand like a thing possessed. With a frenzy born part of alarm and part of genius, Mr. Hawley stamped hard on the floor of the car, and wildly turned the wheel on which his right hand happened to rest. How or why the thing happened is not a question which need trouble anybody. Moreover, neither Mr. Hawley nor Peter, who stood gaping with horror in the road, and crying "Oh, Sir Jarge!" could ever say; but in a moment the car was lying overturned in the ditch, and Mr. Hawley, with a majestic if grotesque dignity, was surveying the havoc he had wrought, from the elevated if uncomfortable shelter of a tall blackthorn hedge, which had received his august body in its flight, much as the cup receives the ball. Mr. Hawley was not hurt in body, though his mind had received the rudest shock. An alarming sound, which had led poor Peter, who felt himself in some sort to be vicariously guilty of the damage, to fancy that his passenger was being torn limb from limb, was really occasioned by the last protest of

the butler's coat, which had, in the agile flight involuntarily taken by a body for which it was never fashioned, parted with an indignant hiss, making the back view of the Pride of New Scotland Yard more extraordinary, if possible, than the front view. Excepting this, however, and certain intimations that the trousers would, on the smallest excuse, follow suit, Mr. Hawley descended with dignity from his perch in the hedge little the worse for his rash experiment. The car, too, was not wholly overturned, but lying on one side, and Peter held out hope that the united strength of himself and the detective might yet get Humpty-Dumpty up again. In deference to the borrowed plumes, Mr. Hawley had to work with caution; but eventually the car was righted. Once more Peter wormed his way underneath, and once more he stayed there a considerable time. By now, however, Mr. Hawley was resigned to failure. His nerve was shaken, and he was now in his inmost heart more anxious to get safely home than to pursue the "miscreant". The possibility, however, of the said miscreant having come to grief on the machine of which his management was so curiously uncertain tempted Hawley to pursue

his quest a little longer. When, after a long delay, Peter was once more in his seat, Hawley asked him where they were.

"Five miles from the Grange," said Peter, "and one from Little Stonyford."

"Is there a station at the latter locality?" asked Mr. Hawley, with a return to the grand manner of Sir Harcourt Courtly.

"There is a station," replied Peter, "but no train after four o'clock."

"I alluded," said Mr. Hawley, "to *the* station—the police-station."

"Oh, yes, there's a police-station. Wasn't I run in for exceeding the legal limit only two months ago?"

"It is impossible," replied the great detective, "for the more highly placed officials to take cognisance of trifling matters of this nature. Doubtless I was informed of the occurrence at the time. Not being exactly a crime, however, it would scarcely come within my more particular province; but, as you seem to be personally acquainted with the station, you shall conduct me thither."

And so they urged on a somewhat less wild career. Either because the gear was not un-

affected by the violent delights of Mr. Hawley's coachmanship, or for some other reason best known to himself, Peter proceeded with the utmost caution until they had left behind them two slight bends in the road. Then, however, when he saw a clear run into Little Stonyford, with not even a cyclist to hamper progress, he let his engine run at something near its top speed, promising himself, *sotto voce*, that the prig of a policeman shouldn't forget his drive in a hurry. There was, as a matter of fact, small fear of Mr. Hawley's doing that, if only, leaving the blackthorn hedge out of the question, because the wind whistled with a powerful chilliness through the gaping chasm left by the mutinous coat of the butler. But Mr. Hawley was to retain other and equally distressing impressions of perhaps the most unforgettable enterprise on which this sagacious tracker had ever embarked. They were nearing the village pond of Little Stonyford at a terrific pace. The car rocked in agony or protest, and Mr. Hawley rocked with it in a similar spirit, having only time to glance at the pond with a shudder of recent recollection. Suddenly he was astonished, pleased and enraged—the emotions fol-

lowed each other in swift succession—to find the car stopping quickly, under pressure of all the brakes, and to hear a familiar tone of voice loudly cry, “Stop!” while the equally familiar flash of a bull’s-eye lantern dazzled his watery eyes. When he looked about him he found the car surrounded by police, and before he could get out a word, he heard himself sharply addressed with the command to descend with all haste and “come along,” followed by the remark: “We’ve been laying for you, and we’ve got you this time.”

Mr. Hawley’s feelings were such that, did we attempt to describe them, we might fall on the Scylla of turgidity or into the Charybdis of bathos; wherefore we beg leave to “pass”.

CHAPTER XII.

WHEN his first shock of outraged amazement had passed into a profound mystification, Mr. Hawley glued himself to his seat with a determined air, folded his arms in a manner worthy of Pettigood himself, glared at Sergeant Smallways, of the Little Stonyford police force, and inquired: "What, pray, is the meaning of this monstrous impertinence?"

His first inclination had been to descend, with swift vengeance in his soul, and deliver, rather in winged words than breezy blows, the castigation so richly deserved by the unparalleled impudence of these rural menials of the force. He was prevented in this course by the recollection of the oddity of his personal appearance. Although the Professor's deerstalker gave him the rakish air of a poacher on the way to a beanfeast, he was yet able to preserve a reasonable shadow of Hawleian dignity so long as the waterproof apron concealed the unspeakable

garments in which his lower limbs were encased, and so long as the vacancy of his own back was decently concealed by the back of the seat. For this good reason, then, he was disinclined to move; and, indeed, the awful solemnity of his accents, backed by the evident self-confidence with which he added, "If you knew who I am; if——" really made Sergeant Smallways begin to wonder whether he had made a mistake, and whether detective Hawley had not been himself mistaken. This, thought Smallways, is no common thief, and hardly a swell mobster. Could it be that he had stopped the lord-lieutenant of the county or a justice of the peace?

Smallways, indeed, was so much inclined to caution and misgiving that the motor would in all probability have been allowed to pass on its way if the unlucky detective had not then said:—

"Come, come, my man, you must let us pass. I am Mr. Mark Hawley, of New Scotland Yard."

Then came another of those shocks of this disastrous day from which poor Mr. Hawley—though this does not concern our story—was unable fully to recover till he had spent two

months in a cure-house ; for no sooner was this "open sesame" out of his mouth than Sergeant Smallways dropped a hand on his shoulder, dragged him from the car, and said, with biting irony :—

"O, Mr. Mark Hawley, was you? Then I know the place for such gentlemen as you. You shall kick your heels in the cell until you're tired of being Mr. Mark Hawley. Hawley, indeed ; I'll soon Hawley you."

Each time that he heard his name thus taken in vain was as a fresh stab for the ill-fated detective ; and when, at a time when he was justified in believing that insult could go no further, Sergeant Smallways saying, "Come, let's have a good look at you," turned him round and flashed a light on him, first in front and then behind, Hawley's dull rage was such that the most dreadful ideas of lawless vengeance possessed the mind of this detector of crime and terror of criminals.

"Well, here *is* a go," was all the sergeant could find to say ; and then, when the full measure of the eccentricity of the figure of fun that stood beside him had sunk into his mind, he burst into a rapid *crescendo* of Homeric

laughter. Indeed, he would have dearly liked to roll on the ground to ease his aching sides, and was only restrained by the fear that his victim might escape, although it seemed highly improbable that even the most ingenious thief could run very far in those trousers and that coat. When his mirth had somewhat subsided, he clapped a pair of handcuffs on to the wrists both of Hawley and of Peter; and in this strange guise, with gyves, common regulation gyves, upon his wrists, the detective of the age was marched, actually marched, by a very junior though zealous officer into the police-station of Little Stonyford.

"Well?" said the superintendent, looking up from his desk as the grotesque procession entered. "Have you got him?"

"Got him, you'll be bound; and I shouldn't wonder if we found the swag from the Grange stowed about the car somewhere."

"And who's this with the felon?" asked the superintendent.

"I be the Professor's shover," answered Peter, with a gloom that was too deep to be entirely natural.

"Bad, bad, very bad," said the superintend-

ent. "We must acquaint the Professor with this at the earliest opportunity. A very serious case indeed—a deep-laid plot—the burglar in alliance with the servants, and the motor-car obviously intended as an addition to the jewels. Lucky for us, sergeant, that Mr. Hawley happened to be in the neighbourhood and gave us the tip. It is a big capture, and they won't forget it at the Yard."

A spasm, as of mingled agony and rage, passed over the manacled eccentric's features at these words. He opened his mouth, he shut it again. He lifted his manacled hands into the air, shook them frantically, and dropped them once more to his side, saying:—

"By heaven! You shall smart for this, as sure as my name is Hawley."

"Eh?" said the superintendent, as if he had not heard aright.

"Oh!" said the sergeant; and the recollection made him laugh again. "That's the best of it all. He says he's Mr. Hawley."

On this, the superintendent and sergeant by common consent began to laugh as if they would never stop, while the wretched detective danced with impotent anguish; and, for some

inscrutable reason, Peter joined in their mirth. When gravity was restored the superintendent issued his orders:—

“Mr. Hawley,” he said, with elaborate emphasis, “can go into number one cell; this grinning jackanapes,” turning to Peter, “into number two, where he can laugh to his heart’s content.”

No sooner said than done; and Hawley, protesting violently, but knowing the ropes too well to make more than a passive resistance, was shoved into a cell, with all the details of which he was only too familiar; while Peter was incarcerated in similar fashion, and the superintendent and his lieutenant retired to take what further steps seemed good to them, conscious of duty ably done and rewards looming in the near horizon of their usually uneventful lives.

Mr. Hawley leant against the corner of his cell and wondered dully whether this was a hideous nightmare or an even more hideous reality. The horror of his situation, the devilish ingenuity and success of the miscreant, the discomfort of his borrowed and rebellious plumes, the abominable vagaries of the motor and of Peter, all mingled with a set determination to

wreak full vengeance on these thick-skulled chaw-bacons, were too much even for his mighty brain, which threatened to give way at this the most appalling crisis of his life. Thoughts of attempted escape occurred to him; but he had sense enough to see very clearly that escape, even if possible, would defeat his immediate object of getting to the bottom of the mystery and making these Stonyford idiots wish they had never been born. Moreover, he was aware that his personal appearance, which had been in no way improved by the ungentle handling of Sergeant Smallways, was not of a nature to excite anything but suspicion among even the most unthinking villagers and countrymen. All the district was, he knew, agog about the burglary at the Grange and anxious to have the credit of capturing the burglar, and he felt that in his present and most unintended disguise he would only be subjected to further indignities if he were to escape from his present intolerable and humiliating position. So he resigned himself, with what patience he could, to a contemplation of the day's adventure, the bitterness of which was only assuaged by the prospect of complete and ultimate revenge.

So much for Hawley. As for Peter, he was of a philosophic temperament, and he adapted himself with tolerable equanimity to circumstances over which he had no control. He had long ceased to be able or care to try to understand the remarkable events of a very remarkable day. In some subtle way he was driven to connect the mystery of the two Hawleys, the errant bicyclist, and this crowning accident with the brief interview between Sir George Paston and himself. For the rest, he was by no means lacking in a sense of humour. He had taken a violent dislike to the real Hawley, Sir George's instructions with regard to whose disposal and hindrance he had faithfully and even gleefully carried out, and he was content to take things pretty much as they came. Sir George was a gentleman—a real gentleman, as he had good reason to know; and had not Sir George said to him, "Peter, so long as the gentleman is delayed—a trifling accident or series of accidents, shall we say? I leave it all to you—you won't regret it. It may be a little uncomfortable for you, but you know me, and I'll make it all right for you"?

"These," as Peter always declared in telling

the story afterwards, "was Sir Jarge's very words"; and Peter waited on events with a very tolerant patience and considerable amusement.

How long Hawley might have been left to his dismal reflections and Peter to his enforced patience, had not something "turned up," no man can rightly say. Something, however, did "turn up," in the person of a zealous young officer of the Stonyford police force. Tomkins, to give him his proper and not undistinguished name, was in every way a credit to the force. Quite lately he had been up on "business of the firm" to the Yard, and there he had seen the great, the only, Hawley *in propria persona*.

To Tomkins, then, on his return from his lawful occasions, the tale of the two Dromios was related with a dramatic touch that made the story lose nothing in the telling by his two colleagues. At first Tomkins stared, and even exceeded the inerriment to which they had to succumb in telling the tale; but on reflection something in the description of the two Hawleys gave pause to his perspicacious mind, and set him thinking.

"The best of it all," wound up the superin-

tendent, "is the calm cheek of this impostor fellow. Naturally we searched him, as you might say, and found this card-case on him—full of cards, you see, all inscribed 'Mark Hawley, New Scotland Yard'. A cunning knave. He is no novice. I shouldn't wonder if we hadn't got one of the big gang."

Tomkins made no instant response to this fresh evidence of deep and guilty design. Instead, he merely turned rather gravely to the superintendent and said:—

"Would you mind if I had a look at your captive? I have a kind of notion I may be able to tell you something about him."

The inspector had no objection, and so Tomkins, with a face of almost preternatural gravity, was led, in something of a brown study, to the door of the cell. This was thrown open with a flourish, and the dejected Hawley was revealed by the light swinging in the corridor. No sooner did Tomkins set eyes on this strange figure than he started back with a horrified gasp.

"Oh, Lor'!" was all he could ejaculate.

Having done this, he slammed the door to (to what?—but we must not stop to pursue this question) and beckoned his astonished com-

panions back to the office. Once there they faced him with anxious and inquiring glances.

"Well," said Tomkins, with a judicial air of finality, "you have been and gone and done it now. This means ruin."

If you can imagine the feelings of an immortal suddenly condemned to mortality, you may get near the feelings of these two poor fellows who so lately saw themselves promoted and rewarded for the smart capture of a criminal, desperate and desperately "wanted".

"Yes," went on Tomkins, with a terrible emphasis, "the man you've got in there is the real Mr. Mark Hawley, and none other."

Incredulity was forced to yield to horror and terror. The poor victims of their own excess of zeal were absolutely beside themselves. At last it was decided that Tomkins should undertake the extremely awkward task of apology and explanation. To cut a very painful story as short as possible, it may be said that the much-wronged and very wrathful Hawley was at length pacified and even mollified. He could not promise that no awkward results should follow; but he did, with a most praiseworthy

magnanimity, promise to wreak no immediate or hasty vengeance.

Fortified with a generous glass of the superintendent's private whisky, and provided with a large long cloak, which masked his curious attire, or lack of attire, Mr. Hawley was conducted to the motor, in which Peter had already been courteously and apologetically installed. With no further stomach for the chase, and vowing more drastic and eternal vengeance on the "miscreant," to whom all his troubles could be so directly traced, Mr. Hawley wearily begged Peter to take him back to the Grange with as much speed as was compatible with absolute safety. Peter, feeling that even Sir Jarge would be reasonably satisfied with what had been done, and having had enough of the adventure on his own account, followed these modest instructions; and so to the Grange Mark Hawley the detective wearily returned—a very different person in every way from the alert official who had left the house so full of hope and determination some hours previously.

CHAPTER XIII.

WE left Sir George Paston and his one fair daughter on their way to the door of the Grange after witnessing the departure of the Sarcophagus motor-car. Just before they reached the house Archie Tempest fell back from the others and joined them.

"Well, Cicely," he said, "I haven't had a word with you since Sir George and I left you on our way to interview the driver."

"No; I can't give you any words, good or bad, until I've told my story to the dad, and I must—yes, I really must—tell it to him alone."

Archie's face fell. Sir George noticed it, and out of the kindness of his heart he said: "That'll be all right. Come into the smoking-room. I'm sure the Professor won't be there, and nobody else is likely to interrupt us. Archie can go into the window-recess with a magazine and a

cigarette while you unfold your tale to me at the other end of the room."

"Thank you, Sir George," said Archie, with a world of meaning; and the three wended their way to the smoking-room—a large, long apartment on the ground floor. Archie, at a word and a look from Cicely, went obediently into the big window-recess, armed with light literature and tobacco, and she and her father sat down opposite to each other near the door facing the big window.

"Now, then," said Sir George, "where are you going to begin?"

"Not," answered Cicely, shaking a finger at him, "not with the mysterious fugitive, for we both know who he is; nor with how exactly he got into all this mess, for that is known only to the demon of the drug which—well, let us say, he lacked your skill to use."

"Now, upon my word, Cicely," said Sir George, with meek penitence, "this really is a lesson. Never again will I prescribe any remedy for anybody, friend or foe, unless——"

"Best leave the saving clause alone, I think," said Cicely smiling, "and come to the real point. Where, do you think, are the mummy-jewels

which brought Mr. Mark Hawley thundering down here? Do you give it up? Then shut your eyes and open your hands and see what Fortune, in spite of the gross provocation you have given her, sends you. There! Now *my* hands are clean of them!"

While she spoke she had found her pocket—inexplicable marvels do take place sometimes—and taken out of it a cardboard box, which she put in Sir George's hands. "Now," she continued, "open your eyes and the box. Isn't that things, and very pretty things?"

"Grammar, my child, grammar," said Sir George; "you are not an epitaph-writer. But I don't quite see. I felt certain they were not far off; but surely *you* didn't—hum!—convey them?"

"Oh, dullest of dads!" she said; "you are almost as bewildered as Professor Sapley, or as Archie. No, no, sir!" she cried to the young man, who, quick to hear his name, had begun to emerge from the recess. "Go back to your corner till I really call you. See here, dad. Poor Mrs. Sapley told me a long, dolorous story, which I'll now condense for you. She had for some time been playing, without her

husband's knowledge, at the Stock Exchange game. She found herself at the end of her own resources, and she was afraid of the Professor's temper. So, very unluckily, after, instead of before, she had shown the Professor the mummy and appurtenances, which she had got for him as a handsome present, she bethought herself that she might raise on the jewels the not very vast sum which she wanted to clear herself, after which she would forswear Stock Exchanging; but a few minutes ago she managed to give the box with the jewels into my keeping, and now I have given it into yours, and, as a penance for your mischief, you must somehow bring everybody out of all the trouble with flying colours. I do not pause for a reply, because I am quite confident that *this far-seeing and intrepid explorer*, as the newspapers call you, will be equal to the emergency."

"Truly," said Sir George, "the best I can do by way of reparation is to accept the responsibility. But do you know I have had easier problems?"

"Which you have solved satisfactorily," rejoined Cicely. "You will get no commiseration from me, but I might help you, perhaps, with

a hint if you were not too proud to invoke a daughter's aid."

"There is," said Sir George, "plenty of precedent. Not that I am used to relying on precedents. Had enough of them when I was a member of what Thackeray's Lord Ringwood called the talking-shop. What is your brilliant idea?"

"I told you," said Cicely, "that it was only a hint. You must know that in the days when you were always travelling, and I was sometimes lonely, I took to scribbling stories in order to get company out of my characters. And here and there a reader found them good company ; but I mustn't digress. The thing is, that if you were one of my characters involved in just the difficulties which you have—which, in fact, surround you, and if somebody told you, as I tell you now, that Professor Sapley is really, in his odd way, devoted to his wife, and sometimes uneasy about her health—nerves, and that sort of thing—well, I think I know what use you, as one of my characters, would make of the information."

"Precisely so," said Sir George, after a brief pause ; "and your grandmotherly kindness to a

perplexed parent is most touching. You give me no hint as to dealing with the other complications ; but that I can't expect, and perhaps I can tackle them. So now to find the eminent Professor." He got up as if to start on his quest, when he was interrupted by an impressive "Hush!" from the window-recess.

"What is it?" he and Cicely cried in the same breath ; and in response "Hush!" came again, yet more impressively, from Archie's lips, the while he beckoned to them to approach stealthily. As they obeyed his pantomime instructions they heard distinctly a tapping on the window-glass, faint and timid at first, but growing gradually in intensity and insistence until it rose to a veritable tattoo.

"That," said Cicely in a whisper, "is exactly what one of my cats used to do until somebody opened the window."

"Then," said Archie, suiting the action to the words, "we will let the cat into the bag."

No sooner was the French window open than there came slantingly and uncertainly through it a muddled, wet, bedraggled and disconsolate form, which was immediately recognised as the wreck of Henry Tempest. He tottered. Archie

deftly pushed forward an armchair, into which the outcast subsided. He looked round him, and said, in a meaningless kind of voice: "It's raining". Then he shook himself and said with emotion: "For goodness' sake give me a whisky-and-soda at once."

In such a request, made in such a tone by the abstemious Mr. Tempest, there lay a whole history of woe. In their anxiety to satisfy his desire the three others came near to defeating their object, but the whisky-and-soda was proffered and drained in three pulls, after which Mr. Tempest sighed, sat up straight, and again lifted up his voice to say: "They're after me."

"Who?" cried the three, with one accord; but Sir George, pulling himself out of the momentary confusion, immediately added: "If, as I suppose, you mean the people in the motor—Hawley, that is, and the driver—that doesn't matter much. But tell us what happened, though it's easy to guess."

"Ah," said Mr. Tempest, "I made sure that consummate detective was in it. Well, as there was only one way by which I could possibly go after I got out of the grounds, he actually found it, and I found myself on a bicycle, and

a poor one, pursued by the motor. It was a terrible time and a terrible race, I can assure you. I don't know what would have happened had not the motor broken down."

"Really!" said Sir George.

"Well, I suppose it did," said Mr. Tempest. "Anyhow, when they were nearly on me, as I imagine, for I didn't dare to look back, I heard a great crash, shouts and objurgations and then a dead silence. I went on. I stopped at—at a place on the way. I told some kind of a story—heavens! how many stories have I *not* told to-day?—and I went on again. I don't know how far I had gone when quite suddenly both the bicycle and I went to pieces—the bicycle absolutely and literally. I left its fragments in a ditch. Then I was utterly exhausted and wretched beyond the dreams of depression. My brain and memory were all nohow. Then I drained the last drop of that infernal stuff of yours, George, and, I must say for it, I believe it helped me to find my way here, and at a pretty good pace, too; and now——" He made a desperate gesture as of one entirely at the end of his tether.

"And now (quite right, Archie)," echoed Sir

George, with parenthetical commending of Archie for exhibiting the mixture as before to the unhappy stockbroker ; "and now we'll have everything all right in no time. Tell me," continued the speaker, full of spirit and animation, now that he felt action the one thing necessary, "did you see or hear anything more of the motor?"

"I saw nothing," replied Tempest, "and I heard nothing, and I sincerely hope I shall never see or hear anything more of it or of the fiends in human shape who pursued me in it."

"Capital!" cried Sir George. "He's coming round again all right, you see ; and capital, too, of the driver—first-rate man that. Now let me see." He pulled out his watch and rapidly made some calculations, of which only such muttered words were audible as "Say twenty minutes—five for natural wastage, ten for artificial—wish he could waste Hawley in them," and then he said to Tempest : "Now, Henry, I can't waste words, but, by gad, Master Shallow, I owe you a thousand pounds, and by way of beginning to pay my debt, I tell you to leave everything to me, and see if I don't straighten it all out."

"My dear George," said Tempest, "I have

the utmost confidence in your strategy and in your tactics. Nothing will shake it. Not even the disastrous——”

“Never mind that now, sir,” cried Archie ; “we’re all agreed with you that Sir George is a tip-top man in a fix, and anything this aged warrior can do for you, you may count on as done, from doing sentry-go to putting Hawley’s head in a bag. Now, Sir George, what are your orders?”

“These,” said Sir George ; “you look after your uncle. Stop a bit.” He rang the bell and told the servant who answered it to bring some sandwiches at once. “Unfold that screen. Stick it up in front of the window. Establish your uncle comfortably in that chair behind it. Give him sandwiches as soon as they appear and a modicum of the antidote you have already applied ; and then stay there with him, both of you as still as mice, until I give the word for your appearance. Cicely, go up to the Professor’s den and send him down to me. I’ll wait just outside the door and meet him on the stairs when I hear him coming down. You have done so well that I can trust you to account for Mrs. Sapley, yourself, and last, not

least, the excellent Pettigood appearing at the right moment."

And on this, Cicely, wafting a kiss to Mr. Tempest and to Archie, disappeared, followed closely by her father. Hard on their going out was the coming in of the servant with a tray of sandwiches, armed with which and with the carafe and syphon, Archie improvised a silent camp for Mr. Tempest and himself behind the big screen, round the corner of which he peeped cautiously from time to time to see what was going on. It was not long before Sir George appeared through the door, linked confidentially arm-in-arm with Professor Sapley.

"May we sit down, Professor?" he said; and as Sapley took the chair lately occupied by Cicely, he himself, having ceremoniously shut the door, resumed his old place. "As you were saying, Professor," he observed (as a matter of fact Sir George had engineered the whole conversation), "we people in whom the instinct of roving seems born should be nowhere without the help, the instruction, the feeling of sympathy which we get from the researches of those at home who know everything of the shrines, if I may say so, where our merely instinctive foot-

steps take us. Knowledge, my dear Professor, knowledge with her handmaid, inductive and deductive reasoning, knowledge provided by those at home—that is really our bulwark.” (*I wonder if Archie is laying all this nonsense up for future use against me*, he reflected to himself.) “Our stronghold I say,” he continued to the pleased and attentive Professor Sapley. “Why, my dear sir, it was your admirably timed and lucid address (*heaven send he does not ask me which address*) that rose to my memory and made me realise the events of thousands of years ago, when I was present at the excavation which brought to the surface of the earth and to sunshine the mummy—a mummy which, for all we know, may be the very one that has just come into your possession—the mummy, I say, of that most ill-fated princess of the third dynasty. (*No, all is well; he is too pleased to inquire what princess.*) Why, my dear Professor, with the aid of your knowledge and insight I seemed to see all the poignant scenes which had disturbed that unlucky royal lady’s life. Think of that!” Sir George leant back in his chair as one overcome with an ecstasy of recollection.

"Why, really, Sir George," said the Professor, with proud humility, "if my humble efforts have indeed enabled you to realise, even for a fleeting moment, that wondrous past, then my poor labours have not indeed been in vain."

"Realise," cried Sir George, "my dear friend, I seemed to live in the very times! And, after all, do you suppose that women were then so very different from what they are now? Take for instance, and here I am impelled to use an *argumentum ad vivos*, take Mrs. Sapley!"

"Take Mrs. Sapley!" the Professor cried, in his shrillest tones; and, rising suddenly, began to pace the door end of the room in obvious excitement.

CHAPTER XIV.

"YES," said Sir George, watching the Professor with judicial interest and dropping the end of his cigarette into an ash-tray; "take Mrs. Sapley as an instance—and, if you will permit me to say so, a very brilliant instance—of the old adage of history repeating herself. I pay history the compliment of identifying her with the Muse, and therefore dignifying her with the feminine gender. I say *dignifying* her, Professor," continued Sir George, who saw a look of honest surprise on Professor Sapley's face, and went on talking to give himself as much time as possible to decide on his next stroke. "For," he continued, "if there is one thing I have learnt in my travels it is that we—I speak not of you and myself, Professor, but of the human race at large—are apt to underrate the supremacy—I say advisedly the supremacy—of the feminine element in human affairs."

"Is that so?" said the Professor blankly; and found nothing else to say.

"Yes, indeed," resumed Sir George, who had now coolly decided on his plan, and therefore appeared to wax a little warm, "that is so, and I should dearly like to give you all those instances which crowd to my memory in support of this belief. But to return to one immediate and pressing instance——"

"Ah, yes!" said Sapley, with an air at once vacant and preoccupied.

"The princess," Sir George continued, speaking with singular keenness and authority, "whose mummy has been, we will assume, indirectly concerned with these present concatenations, this princess who lived in the dim past, which is to you as alive as the living moment—she, the daughter of a royal race, was, let us say, like other mortals, royal or not, subject to mortal affections. She was, I imagine, of a highly-strung, exceptionally nervous temperament. I see you about to observe that in so highly civilised a race as the Egyptians this was not altogether exceptional. No, to be sure. But in the case of the princess it was at least unfortunate, and both directly and

indirectly it led to that disastrous ending of her career on this earth for which you, with your intimate knowledge of those times, in the very atmosphere of which you are steeped, can feel even more sympathetically and acutely than I can."

And, Paston reflected to himself, if ever I drew a bow at a venture, this is that very bow, yew-backed, and all the rest of it.

He leant back in his chair with the air of one who had delivered a fateful saying. The Professor, who had listened to Paston's purposely slurred and hurried speech with ever-growing astonishment, and consequently with ever-widening eyes, now rose from his chair, just exactly as if he and Sir George had been attached together by a string which pulled the Professor up and out of his chair while it drew Sir George down into the recesses of his.

"Sir George Paston," quoth the Professor, standing over him, and speaking in shrill and excited tones, "you told me you were nothing of an Egyptologist!"

"So," said Sir George to himself, "my shot has rung the bell." Then, aloud: "Professor Sapley, I told you the cold truth. I am a child

in these matters of hieroglyphics ; but, naturally, in the course of my wanderings I have picked up some curious things—*cannabis indica* among them, and be damned to it," he muttered to himself.

"Eh! What?" said the Professor. "But it is most extraordinary, most unaccountable! What you have said by way of conjecture about the ill-fated princess whose mummy has come into my possession is exactly and precisely, I pledge you my word, the gist—I don't speak of details, but the gist—of what is recorded on the papyrus found with the mummy. Astounding! Really I can find no other word! Astounding! You must have some quite abnormal power of insight!"

"My dear Sapley," said Sir George, rising and again linking his arm in that of the admiring Professor, "that same insight has sometimes saved my life, and sometimes been of use to my friends. Now I want it to be of use to you," and he patted the Professor's arm as he spoke.

"To me, Sir George? You are more than kind," said the still admiring Professor. "But how?"

"Marry, tropically," rejoined Paston. "In

descanting on the qualities of the Egyptian princess, I began with, and I return to, Mrs. Sapley!"

"Mrs. Sapley!" echoed the Professor again. His tone was still one of astonishment, but this time it was a respectful astonishment.

"My dear friend," said Sir George, pacing up and down with the Professor, "I felt in some strange way—let us call it, for want of a better name, intuition—that there was a mysterious sympathy, so to speak, between this Egyptian princess and your admirable wife. The same singular gifts, the same nervous, high-strung temperament. Now, this combination of qualities led, in the case of the princess, to certain indiscretions which"—here he watched the Professor with the tail of his eye—"you and I need not particularise."

"No, no!" said the Professor; "you are always discreet, Sir George."

"In the case of Mrs. Sapley," continued Paston, now feeling quite sure of his ground, "it has led to but one indiscretion, if it deserves to be so called, and that one," he hurried on, "will cease to exist as soon as you have heard of it, and with your happy alliance

of learning and sound common-sense set everything right."

"My dear Sir George, anything I can do," exclaimed the still wondering and admiring Professor.

"The state of things is this," Sir George resumed. "The jewels, which have been the cause of so much commotion, need no longer be sought for. The fact is that Mrs. Sapley repossessed herself of them after she had shown you her gift, with the intention of turning them to account in a way which might have been a little surprise" (*and that, said Sir George to himself, is literally true*); "but, you see, you noticed the absence of the jewels and were much perturbed about it. Mrs. Sapley, knowing your high spirit, and being, as we have said, herself very highly strung, became alarmed, bewildered—I am sure you are the very person to understand the whole situation—and has been really, if I may use so strong a word, afraid to restore them to you until this moment. Now she has begged me to act as her deputy, and, in short, here they are."

Sir George, as he spoke, produced the cardboard case, opened it, and placed it in the hands

of Professor Sapley, who gazed at the jewels and said : " My dear Sir George, your extraordinary powers of divination, your thoughtful kindness—really, truly, I do not know how to thank you ! "

" My excellent friend," replied Sir George, " that is very simply done. Only relieve Mrs. Sapley from the anxiety which has oppressed her, and I am more than thanked. "

" My dear sir," said the Professor shrilly, but with a note of real feeling, " that is exactly what I should like to do at this very moment ! "

Pat on the words, incited or—who knows?—even pushed thereto by Cicely (how long had Cicely been waiting and listening ?) there came faltering through the door Mrs. Sapley.

" Arabella Georgina ! " cried the Professor, with a burst of affection ; and Sir George, exercising the discretion which Sapley had praised, walked over to the window and beckoned Mr. Tempest and Archie out from behind the screen.

" You did the trick first-rate, sir," said Archie.

" Excellent, indeed, my dear George," said Tempest ; " but I must tell you at once there's a difficulty about my meeting the Professor. "

He hurriedly explained to Paston, as nearly as he could remember it, the scene which had taken place in his office that morning.

"I charge myself with putting that right," cried Sir George gaily; and the three crossed the room to the space in front of the door, where the Professor and Mrs. Sapley appeared to be exchanging explanations and confidences in the most amicable fashion. Just behind them, but as yet unobserved by them, were Cicely and Pettigood.

Archie, encouraged in a natural impulse by a look from Cicely, went straight to Mrs. Sapley and began to make himself as agreeable as possible about nothing in particular; and that, as Cicely afterwards told him, he had a knack of doing as well as most people. Sir George deftly engaged the Professor's attention with congratulations and a string of well-timed nonsense. Pettigood, the loyal, the devoted, the destined Pettigood, took one stride to Mr. Tempest, and said, in accents of real emotion:—

"My master, my dear master, you are yourself again, thank heaven!"

"Thank heaven!" repeated Mr. Tempest; "and you, my good old friend. The events of

to-day have but hastened a project I have long entertained. My dear Pettigood, I propose, if it meets with your approval, that in future the business hitherto conducted by me shall be in the hands of Messrs. Tempest and Pettigood! Not a word more now, we will go into details later; and see, Sir George is claiming my attention." Paston had tapped Mr. Tempest on the arm, and now whirled him round to face Professor Sapley, to whom he hurriedly said:—

"My dear Professor, I am anxious to make you better acquainted with Mr. Tempest, my oldest friend. We were at Eton together, and have kept it up ever since. You have seen him already to-day, but he was then the victim of a double misfortune; he was suffering from a malady appreciated only by its victims—hay fever. A certain drug had been prescribed for him by—by——"

"The chemist, sir," said Pettigood, advancing and speaking in a deferential yet convincing tone; "the chemist, I think, made a slight but not unimportant mistake."

"Quite so, Mr. Pettigood. Thank-you for reminding me," said Sir George. "You see, it is not a drug that can be played with, and I

am told that the very slightest error in compounding it may produce in the patient a sort of abstractedness, if I may so term it—a temporary absence from immediate concentration of purpose. I do not know if I make myself clear?”

“Sir George,” said the Professor, “it is strange that for a second time you have touched nearly on what I thought to be a secret of Egypt. A papyrus which I have upstairs describes exactly the condition of things which you indicate. Mr. Tempest, I shall be delighted to show it to you and explain to you, as best I can, this curious record, which may have some interest for you.”

“Then that’s all right,” said Sir George; “and now everything is settled up except——” At this moment a furious ringing at the front-door bell made itself heard.

“Ah,” said Archie, who had left Cicely and Mrs. Sapley talking together in order that he might afford any needed support, “depend upon it, Sir George, that’s your exception asserting himself.”

And, indeed, hard upon Archie’s words came the appearance of Mr. Mark Hawley, closely followed by the driver of the motor-car, who,

keeping a secret eye upon Sir George, poured forth a loquacious story, begun apparently before his entrance, concerning firing, carburetters, sparking plugs, and other motorish ware. Twice and thrice Hawley, who, although his woeful tatters were kindly hidden under the enveloping cloak lent him by the superintendent, looked a good deal battered and most terribly put out, essayed in vain to interrupt him. At last, raising his voice through the driver's final mutterings, he said :—

“Sir George Paston, ladies and gentlemen, I have a reputation and I don't want to keep it up by making mysteries when there's no mystery, like detectives in books. The truth is, I've been beat so far—by accident. But it's my trade, though I say it that shouldn't, to beat accident, and beat it I will if you'll give me a little time.”

There was excellent resolve in the look and tone of the baffled detective, and a general murmur of applause followed his little speech. Sir George stepped up to him and said :—

“My dear Hawley, I am sure I am but the mouthpiece of every one present in saying that you have done what a man can. The truth is

that the only mystery, to borrow your own admirable words, is that there is no mystery at all. The missing things—and this, I know, will cause no surprise or annoyance to one of your wide and tried experience—are in fact, not missing!”

“Why, that’s just exactly and precisely what I said from the very first moment, Sir George,” cried Hawley, fully equal to the occasion.

“So you did, my dear fellow, so you did,” said Sir George; “and the event, as always, has proved you right.”

“But there’s another matter, Sir George,” interrupted Hawley. “This is neither the place, nor the time, nor would it be discreet on my part now to mention any details; but some one, Sir George, has been personating me, Mark Hawley, not only here, as you know, but also actually at the very police-station of Little Stonyford! Now that, Sir George, is——”

“In ordinary circumstances a very gross offence,” broke in Sir George, who had swiftly divined, putting Tempest’s story and Hawley’s speech together, the gist at least of what had happened. “But when I tell you, my dear friend, that I, and I only, am morally, though,

in truth, innocently, responsible for a really shocking misunderstanding, I feel sure that friendship will induce you to suspend your judgment. Your own conduct of a very trying business has been of the most admired description."

Here ensued a very brief whispered colloquy between Paston and Hawley, who, we have reason to believe, uttered, answering Sir George, these words among others: "Certainly the kind commendation *and* influence cannot, if I may use such an expression, be too highly—indeed, most handsome, I am sure, Sir George. Willingly refrain from any further step till convenient to give explanation."

"Now," said Sir George, looking at his trusty watch, "who is coming over to Sanssouci for the night?"

"That," said the Professor, "is a question which you must allow me to answer, and my reply is *nobody*. I am sure there is plenty of room here. Why, we would turn out some of the mummies if necessary—eh, Arabella Georgina?"

"There is plenty of room, Theophilus. I will see to it at once," said Mrs. Sapley.

"This," said Mr. Tempest, "is most kind

and hospitable—most hospitable and kind on your part, Professor Sapley. It is now only necessary for me to explain that——” Here Mr. Tempest stopped dead, and a strange contortion convulsed his features.

“I took”—he seemed to struggle for utterance—“the—last—dose some time ago—excitement and judicious stimulant kept it off since, but——” Again he seemed as one in the grip of an unseen enemy; and then, with the noise of a small earthquake—*solvuntur sternutamento tabulae*—hay fever gave an unmistakable sign of reasserting itself.

P.S.—A certain friendly critic has taken exception to the partnership proposed by Mr. Tempest. We have noted of late a fashion among story-tellers of introducing their work with a preface which either states or hints that the events narrated are true, and have a personal and gossipy interest. Without going so far as this, we may yet follow the fashion to the extent of observing in this postscript that we are acquainted (slightly) with a connection (distant) of the original (doubtful) of Mr. Henry Tempest. This person, on being appealed to, said that he considered Tempest to be just such

an easy-going, impulsive, wealthy, lucky old idiot as to make such a proposal and find it turn out well. Wherefore we have left Mr. Tempest's threat to Edward Pettigood untouched.

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